



Concordia Theological Monthly



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CONTENTS

FOR JANUARY 1953	PAGE
THE HOLY BIBLE, REVISED STANDARD VERSION. <i>George V. Schick</i>	1
OUR ENGLISH BIBLE. <i>E. J. Saleska</i>	13
LUTHER ON CREATION. <i>Henry W. Reimann</i>	26
GRACE OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. (Concluded.) <i>Walter R. Roebrs</i>	41
HOMILETICS	53
LIFE THROUGH DEATH. Sermon at funeral of President Louis J. Sieck. <i>By R. R. Caemmerer</i>	62
THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER	66
BOOK REVIEW	

Wach, Joachim: Types of Religious Experience. — *Joest, Wilfried:* Gesetz und Freiheit. — *Adam, Karl:* One and Holy. — *Lavik, John R.:* The Christian Church in a Secularized Church. — *Oglesby, Stuart R.:* You and the Holy Spirit. — *Reichelt, Karl Ludwig:* Religion in Chinese Garment. — *Hamilton, Floyd E.:* The Basis of Millennial Faith.

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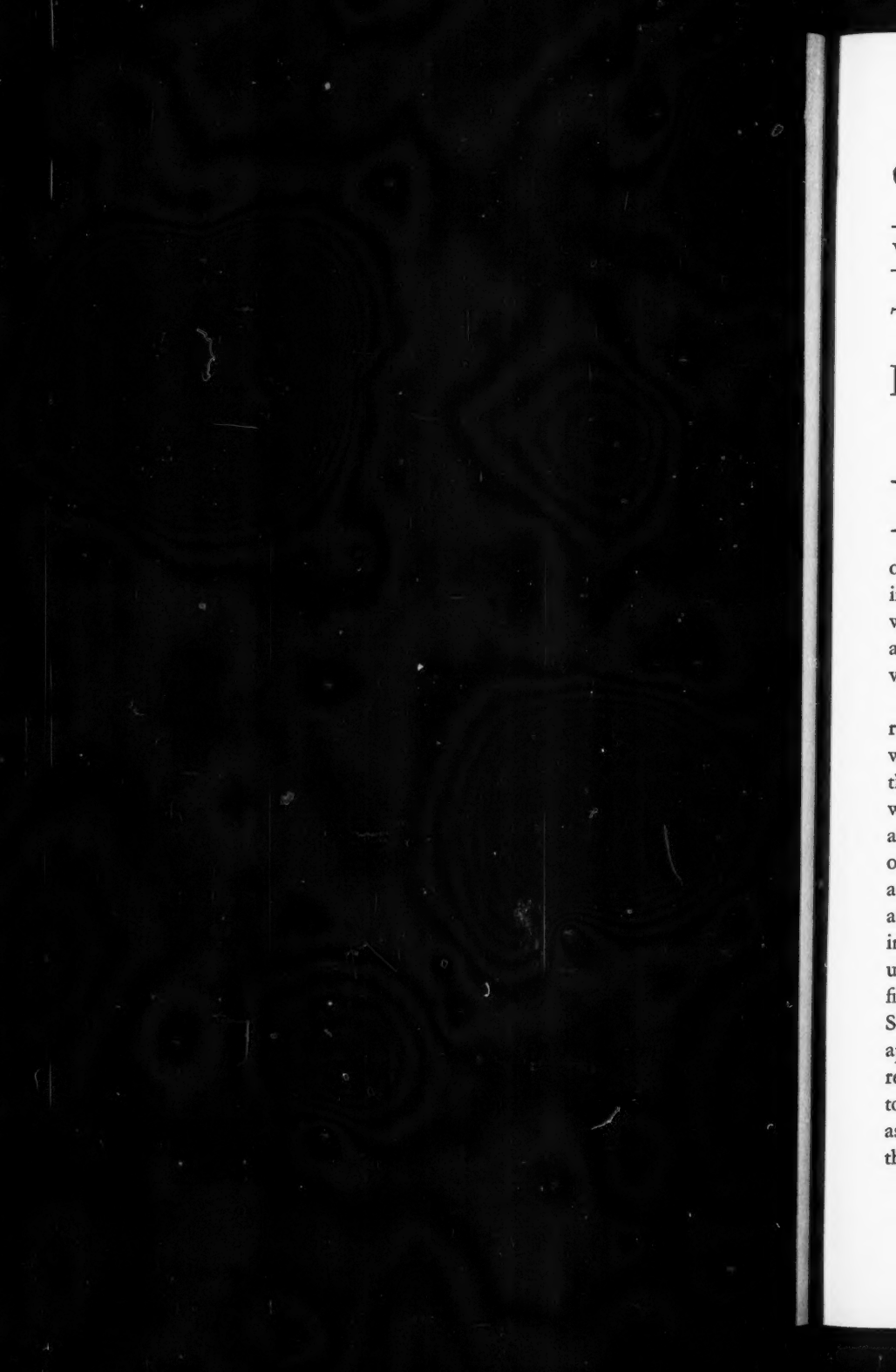
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Concordia Theological Monthly

VOL. XXIV

JANUARY 1953

No. 1

The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version

By GEORGE V. SCHICK

IN the fall of 1952 Thomas Nelson and Sons placed on the market the Revised Standard Version of the complete Holy Bible. The New Testament section remains substantially the same as the one which already appeared in 1946, but a few changes of a lesser import were given room when this text was issued in combination with the Old Testament translation. The latter, however, is new and represents the results of years of intensive research by the Revision Committee.

The Revised Standard Version of the Bible was given a varied reception. There were those who extolled its merits to the skies and were ready to have it supplant at once the King James Version of the Scriptures for all purposes. At the other extreme were some who saw in the new version many sinister traces of Modernism and a carefully planned effort to undermine some of the basic tenets of Christianity. Owing to an elaborate and very skillfully conducted advertising campaign, the RSV (Revised Standard Version) has attained a large circulation even at this early date, its sale reaching in the neighborhood of one million copies. As the new year gets under way, additional copies will be ready and no doubt will also find a ready sale. Our church members who have an interest in the Scriptures will buy and read this new version. They will want an appraisal of its merits and faults, and they are entitled to it. To reach one, the following article is intended to be helpful. It attempts to make a fair and unbiased evaluation and to set aside, as much as that is humanly possible, any prejudice and even sentiment in the effort.

On opening and inspecting a copy of the RSV, the external fea-

tures of the make-up naturally first strike the eye. We are here dealing with a modern book. The text is no longer mechanically broken up into shorter or longer verses, but is printed in paragraphs, something which is very helpful to the reader, enabling him at once to see the thought divisions. The direct discourse is indicated by quotes, without which modern books are unthinkable. The poetic sections of the Scriptures are arranged in lines, a practice introduced to a limited extent into the 1881 revision of the KJV (King James Version), but in the RSV employed wherever poetry may appear. The italics of the KJV, which were of no interest to the majority of Bible readers anyway, have completely disappeared. The very fact that the RSV has the appearance of being something that fits into our own era is something in its favor and should invite people to read the Bible.

The modernizing process is apparent also in the language of the RSV. Archaic words have yielded to modern equivalents. The interesting booklet, *An Introduction to the RSV of the Old Testament*, lists no less than five pages of words occurring in the KJV which in the course of time "have so changed in meaning, or acquired such new meanings, that they no longer convey to the reader the meaning which they had for the King James translators and were intended to express." In the interest of better understanding the RSV has replaced such words by modern equivalents.

Among grammatical forms no longer in common use today the KJV has an abundance of "thou" and of the remaining case forms of the singular of this pronoun, of the possessives corresponding to them, and of the plural "ye." All these have been replaced by the plural forms which we are accustomed to use in everyday life, except where God is directly addressed. That this exception was a wise one may be doubted, since it gave occasion to the charge that in passages like Ps. 2:7 and Matt. 16:16 the reference to Jesus by means of "you" is intended to imply a denial of His deity. The charitable explanation may, however, be found in assuming an inconsistency in the use of "thou" and "you" when referring to Christ, for in Mark 1:9 the RSV has: "Thou art my beloved Son: with thee I am well pleased."

The subjunctives which the KJV used liberally but in modern English have practically entirely disappeared, have no room in the

RSV. And that, too, is as it should be. When people have lost all feeling for the subjunctive mood, there is no excuse for trying to continue its use. The Scriptures have a message from God to mankind; they are not to be made a means of a campaign to aid the survival or revival of ways of expression which are on the wane.

The RSV in the Old Testament has dispensed with reproducing the idiomatic Hebrew *le'mor*, literally meaning *to say*, which the KJV rendered by the participle *saying*, inasmuch as it served merely to introduce direct discourse in the same manner as the untranslatable *ὅτι recitativum* in the New Testament. Luther, who felt himself less slavishly bound to reproduce the original Hebrew word by word than did the translators of the KJV, on occasion also omitted the equivalent for *le'mor* when another verb form of the same verb already occurred in the same clause, e. g., in Gen. 27:6, a passage in which the KJV retains *saying*, but avoids the odd-sounding "Rebekah said to her son, saying," by replacing "said" by "spake." Where the familiar *and it came to pass that* has no particular significance, the RSV drops it in an effort to conform with our modern usage of stating the action or situation more directly rather than in the roundabout Hebrew manner. A troublesome element in the translation of the Scriptures has always been the conjunction *and*, which Hebrew uses with a frequency that becomes monotonous in English. The RSV tries to overcome this effect by sometimes omitting the word entirely and then again varying it by substituting *so*, *now*, *then*, *but*, and other conjunctions, as the context may suggest. Even at that there are still a large number of examples of *and* remaining in the new text. As one reads the Scriptures in this modernized form, one cannot but agree that all these changes make for easier reading.

In spite of the modernization of the KJV which the RSV represents, the Revising Committee has made a sincere effort to preserve the style of the earlier version as much as possible. In the preface to their book, p. IX, we read: "The Revised Standard Version is not a new translation in the language of today. It is not a paraphrase which aims at striking idioms. It is a revision which seeks to preserve all that is best in the English Bible as it has been known and used through the years. . . . We have resisted the temptation to use phrases that are merely current usage, and have sought to put

the message of the Bible in simple, enduring words that are worthy to stand in the great Tyndale-King James tradition." Reading the RSV, one gains the conviction that the Committee has remained true to its plan and has adhered as closely as was possible to the KJV. In some instances, as, e. g., in Psalm 23, they have even retained the King James translation word for word except for the introduction of a few modern words.

The RSV further incorporates also the results of modern research in Bible lands. Archaeology has made some important contributions to the understanding of the Scriptures, especially of the Old Testament. *An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the Old Testament* devotes a section to pointing out the use which the Revising Committee made of the discoveries made by archaeologists.

Of even greater importance than the matters which have been touched upon so far is the question to what extent the theology of the individual members of the Revising Committee may have influenced the RSV. Prof. Wm. A. Irwin, one of the members of the Committee, expresses himself on this point in *An Introduction*, p. 15. He states: "Linguistic science knows no theology; those of most contradictory views can meet on common ground devoid of polemic, agreed that Hebrew words mean such and such, and their inflection and syntactical relations imply this or that. These facts establish an agreed translation. Then, and then only, may the exegete and dogmatist busy himself with theological deductions from the thoughts of Biblical writers. The Bible translator is not an expositor; however pronounced his views about Biblical doctrines, he has no right whatever to intrude his opinions into the translation, or to permit his dogmatic convictions to qualify or shape its wording. His one responsibility, and it is absolute, is to render the Biblical meaning as accurately and effectively as is possible into appropriate English." What Prof. Irwin states applies, of course, with equal force also to the translation of the New Testament. His position will receive the hearty second of Lutheran Bible students, since the Lutheran Church has always held that a thorough knowledge of the languages in which the Bible was originally written is a *sine qua non* for understanding the Scriptures. Without such knowledge no serious study of the Bible can be carried on successfully. The essential prerequisite

for understanding the Word is the understanding of the words, their meaning and their grammatical forms, in which the Word comes to us from God.

From these preliminaries we may proceed to an inquiry as to how the Revising Committee arrived at what they considered the proper text to use as a base from which to make their translations. In the New Testament the matter was a relatively simple one. Thousands of different manuscripts were available, some of which originated in the early centuries of the Christian era, a few fragments even dating back to within decades of the time when the originals were written. Through textual criticism carried on by competent specialists a text which is considered superior has been established and, where doubt as to the correct reading still exists, a careful record appears of variant readings with their source clearly indicated. A popular critical text of this type is that of Nestle. The RSV takes the results of New Testament text studies into account, and so there appear some variant translations in the footnotes to the English translation which reflect the possibility that in the respective case one may, with good manuscript backing, translate also in a different manner from the one adopted by the Revising Committee and embodied in their text.

But when we come into the area of the Old Testament, the situation is entirely different. There the RSV, especially in the case of the books which do not fall into the category of narrative, has a large number of instances in which the translations are the result of conjectures, in other words, the situation with the Hebrew original was so desperate the translators felt compelled to resort to surgery, that is, reconstruct from the context what they felt the writer originally wished to say. It goes without saying that the Revising Committee in these cases endeavored to use sound judgment and did not simply adopt any arbitrary translation which may have come into their mind. In other instances, the footnotes in the Old Testament section of the RSV explain that the adopted rendering is not based on the Hebrew text as we have it in our printed Hebrew Bibles, but on translations found in one or several of the earliest versions of the Hebrew Scriptures. This has given rise to the criticism that the RSV too frequently adopts readings found in the ancient versions, i. e., the Septuagint, the Targums, the Syriac Ver-

sion, and the Vulgate, which are either entirely lacking in the so-called Masoretic Hebrew text or are at variance with it. There can be no doubt that in some instances these versions reflect the original Hebrew text, for it is well known that the so-called Masoretic text, which we have in our printed Hebrew Bibles, represents a *textus receptus* which was established by Jewish Biblical scholars of the early Christian centuries and since then has been transmitted with almost incredible accuracy by copyists down to the present day. This explains why the hundreds of Hebrew manuscripts in existence today show practically no variants. The only exception involving a longer text is the Book of Isaiah among the so-called Dead Sea Scrolls, which were only recently discovered. But even this ancient scroll, though it dates from approximately the second century B. C., yielded only thirteen instances where its variants proved worthy of consideration. The footnotes introduced by "One ancient Ms." in the Book of Isaiah indicate them. Yet it must be reasonably concluded that the original Hebrew text in the course of centuries must have suffered at least to some extent at the hands of copyists. To assume that the Pentateuch, written approximately 3,500 years ago, is still preserved letter by letter in its original form would involve nothing less than a miracle. The testimony of the Septuagint, in view of its age, cannot be completely ignored. But to what extent this oldest of the known translations of the Old Testament can be relied upon is again a question that is often difficult to decide, since its text, too, has suffered at the hands of copyists. How much importance is to be attached to the readings of the remaining three ancient versions to which we referred above remains a matter of judgment in the various instances where they have departures from the Masoretic text.

Every translator of the Old Testament Scriptures, in instances where the Hebrew text apparently did not make sense, has resorted to conjectures. A passage in point is, e. g., Micah 2:4, the final words of which the KJV renders: "Turning away he hath divided our fields." Luther offers: "Wann wird er uns die Aecker wieder zuteilen, die er uns genommen hat?" Obviously the situation of the Hebrew text is desperate, yet the translator is obligated in some way or other to reproduce the text he has before him. Nothing else remains but to rely on one's judgment and to offer the reader

what may seem best in the context. The translator must see to it, of course, that in such cases he does not violate the clear teachings of Scripture elsewhere.

Our Lutheran Church has also never taken a stand against a translator's making use of the ancient versions in order to determine the meaning of a passage in the Old Testament. Luther, e. g., in Ruth 4:5, follows the text of the Vulgate rather than the Hebrew, a procedure adopted in this passage also by the RSV. Many other instances could be mentioned where Luther, the KJV, as well as the RSV find it necessary to fall back on the ancient versions in order to produce a sensible translation. There is a danger, of course, that a translator relies too much on the ancient versions, and if he becomes guilty of this attitude and does not give the Masoretic text the consideration it deserves, his translations are justly subject to criticism. To judge the RSV on this score at this early moment would be premature, since it would involve a very exhaustive and time-consuming examination of the RSV text.

In a few instances the RSV has even adopted additions which do not appear in the Hebrew. An example of this occurs in Gen. 4:8, where the Samaritan Pentateuch, as well as the four ancient versions referred to above, have additions, the sense of which the RSV reproduces by: "Let us go out to the field." One may have doubts as to whether these words ever appeared in the original Hebrew. Their addition is readily explained. The verse begins with "Cain said ('amar) to his brother Abel," but no direct discourse follows. The King James Version was aware of the difficulty, but softened it by replacing *said* with *talked with*, which, of course, is not an accurate translation. Yet the RSV's inclusion of the addition seems unnecessary, since elsewhere it does not seem to feel the necessity of avoiding this form of aposiopesis. Another instance of it occurs Jonah 2:10, where the Hebrew has: "The Lord said," and again no direct discourse follows. In this instance the RSV employs the same device as the KJV and replaces *said* by *spoke*. The addition of: "Let us go out to the field," looks very much like a scribal addition introduced from the story of David and Jonathan, 1 Sam. 20:11. Another addition not found in the Masoretic text occurs in the RSV in Gen. 21:9, where the words "with her son Isaac" are introduced from the ancient versions. Also here the added words seem to re-

flect a scribal interpretation and are unnecessary. However, it is a comfort that in these instances, as well as in a few other passages where the RSV has additions, nothing of any importance is involved.

Reference has repeatedly been made in the preceding paragraphs to instances in which one may not agree with the procedure and the choices of the Revising Committee in bringing out the RSV. The main attacks on the new version, however, are focused on a few passages, to which we shall now direct our attention.

The translators of the RSV have been severely taken to task for giving preference to the expression "young woman" to "virgin" in the familiar passage Is. 7:14. The claim has been made that here again we have another link in the evidence which proves the new version's Modernistic tendency. The present writer is convinced that the Revising Committee made a mistake in this instance and would have translated far more in conformity with the context if it had retained "virgin" in the text and placed "young woman" in the footnote instead of vice versa. However, there may be extenuating circumstances. The Committee's eagerness to be very scientific may have dictated the choice, for it cannot be denied that the Hebrew noun "almah" has the meaning "young woman." The masculine counterpart is "elem," rendered in 1 Sam. 17:56 by both the KJV and the RSV by "stripling," i. e., a youth who is entering manhood. The female counterpart is the "almah," a mature young woman. The word does not stress the idea of virginity, but is never used of a married woman. It is therefore perfectly in harmony with the context in Is. 7:14 if the Septuagint translates "almah" by παρθένος, and it is regrettable that the RSV, which otherwise in many instances places great weight on the text of the Septuagint, here does not follow its lead. So far as the doctrine of the Virgin Birth is concerned, the translation "young woman" in the Isaiah passage in no wise puts it into jeopardy, for this doctrine is based on the inspired revelation of the Evangelists. Even though Matt. 1:23 quotes the Septuagint version, this by no means elevates this version or any part of it to the status of inspired Scripture.

Another passage in which the Revision Committee's translation is disappointing is Ps. 2:12, where KJV reads: "Kiss the Son," but the RSV makes of it: "Kiss his feet." As the footnote indicates,

this translation is a pure conjecture for which no reason can be given except that the revisers for some reason or other felt that the KJV's rendering was unacceptable, but why this was the case is not indicated. Franz Delitzsch, in his *Biblischer Kommentar ueber die Psalmen*, fifth edition, has a full discussion of the difficulties which the ancient versions had in dealing with *nashsh-qu bar*. He expresses his surprise that all of them except the Syriac had failed to grasp its meaning, which in Delitzsch's opinion can only be: "Kiss the Son." The choice of "bar" for "son" he explains as due to an effort to avoid the unpleasant combination "ben pen," which would have arisen if the usual Hebrew word for son (*ben*) had been used. Fortunately, as in some other instances, no great harm is done by the RSV's translation in this case, since the eternal generation of the Son is declared in the earlier part of Psalm 2, and there the version is satisfactory. Nevertheless we cannot complacently accept the shift of homage from the Son to Jehovah, something which the RSV's conjecture makes mandatory. Neither do we agree with the footnote that "the Hebrew of 11 b and 12 a is uncertain."

The RSV's translation of Job 19:26, 27 seems to involve a contradiction. In verse 26 the English for "*mibb-sari*" is "without my flesh," which evidently is intended to mean deprived of my flesh. Yet in the immediately following verse Job very clearly speaks of his eyes, which are a part of his flesh or his physical make-up. Job is here speaking of his hope of a bodily resurrection after his death; and if the RSV had taken into the text the footnote "from my flesh" or had translated "out of my flesh," there would have been no difficulty. It may further be remarked that the translation of the preposition "*min*" by "without" is in itself something very unusual.

Turning now to the New Testament section of the RSV of the Holy Bible, we learn from the Preface that the Revising Committee has made about eighty changes in the 1946 edition of the New Testament before republishing it in 1952. Most of these are not of a very important nature, but readers will no doubt be grateful for the reappearance in Acts 17:28 of the KJV's rendering: "In him we live and move and have our being." But there are some additional instances in which, to our way of thinking, a change would have improved the text. In 1 Tim. 3:2 there still remains the subjective translation: "A bishop . . . must be married only once."

It is true, a footnote is added to the effect that the Greek has: "A bishop must be . . . the husband of one wife." If this is the literal translation of the original, why not put it into the body of the text? That would leave it to the individual interpreter to decide according to his own best judgment what the Apostle had in mind. As the situation now is, the reader is told that the Apostle meant to forbid a second marriage in the case of priests, but, of course, if one is not satisfied with this opinion, one may also have another, which, however, is of inferior worth.

In Rom. 9:5 it is regrettable that the Committee did not see its way clear to restore the KJV's relative clause: "Who is over all, God blessed forever," a grand declaration of the Apostle's faith in the deity of Christ, climaxed by a solemn "Amen." To the reader of the Greek New Testament this appears as a very natural meaning and thoroughly in harmony with Paul's estimate of the Lord Jesus, whose appearance to him on the way to Damascus had left an indelible impression on his entire life. The question whether the words are to be understood as a modifier of the noun Christ or as a doxology, such as the Apostle occasionally used in his Letters, ultimately becomes a matter of deciding what the proper punctuation of the passage ought to be, and the ancient manuscripts on this score are of no help whatever.

Entirely to be rejected is the RSV's translation of τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου in Gal. 4:3 by "the elemental spirits of the universe," which ascribes to the Apostle an entirely pagan conception of the spirit world, foreign to him both as Jew and as Christian. Far superior is the KJV's translation "elements of the world," the meaning of which becomes clear from the context, especially from verse 9. Lenski's comments on τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου are convincing and to the point: "The Old Testament believers were placed under material, earthly things that were beggarly, indeed, all of them far beneath these believers. They had to submit to regulations about food and drink, washings and purifications, sacrifices of all kinds, rules about places, times, bodily actions of all kinds." The Apostle is thus here speaking of the yoke of the Law, and that is a theme on which he had much to say to the Galatians, whom false teachers were leading astray so that they might turn their back on the doc-

trine of salvation through faith and might seek once more a righteousness through the works of the Law.

The criticism of the RSV which we have submitted is not exhaustive. As the new version undergoes scrutiny by thousands of eyes, many other instances may be discovered where improvement is possible. If the RSV achieves nothing more than to stimulate people to examine its text closely in order to determine whether or not it reproduces in English in an acceptable manner the divine truths couched in the Hebrew and Greek of the Scriptures, the project has already achieved a worth-while end.

To be of some actual value, criticism must be fair. In some instances this has not been the case. Thus, e. g., because the RSV places the pericope of the adulterous woman in a footnote, the RSV has been accused of making a footnote of the inspired Scriptures. That charge is entirely misleading. Before it can be made in justice, proof must first be furnished that John 7:53—8:11 is actually part of the inspired Scriptures. The fact that this text appears in the KJV proves absolutely nothing, since it is missing in some ancient manuscripts, in others appears at the end of the Gospel according to St. John, and in still others at the end of chapter twenty-one of St. Luke. The problem of its authenticity is an old one. The learned conservative exegete E. W. Hengstenberg, a front-rank battler against the rationalism which had invaded Germany, in his commentary on the Gospel according to St. John, published in 1862, declares: "There can be no doubt that this section was not an original part of the Gospel, but was carried into it by a strange hand. It is lacking in so numerous and important critical aids that this reason alone may almost suffice to establish its spuriousness." Hengstenberg was a Lutheran, and the Lutheran Church, which is broad enough in its outlook to recognize homologoumena and antilegomena among the books of the Bible, has no hesitation to grant honest textual criticism a voice in establishing the genuine form of the original Scriptures.

In conclusion the question: "What shall be our attitude toward the RSV?" deserves brief consideration. There are some who advocate boycotting the new version because of its shortcomings. This, to us, seems a very shortsighted policy. The RSV has its faults, so has the KJV, and so has every other translation of the Bible. If this

fact is accepted as sufficient ground for a boycott, Christianity may just as well cease to produce translations and insist exclusively on the use of the Scriptures in the original tongues. The Septuagint was in many respects a very poor translation, and yet the New Testament deigns to quote it. Why should we not make use of the RSV to the extent that this appears possible? With all its shortcomings it nevertheless presents the Word of God in the language of the people. Any sinner can learn from it the way of salvation through faith in Christ Jesus, and, after all, that is the main purpose of the Scriptures. The Revising Committee has shown itself agreeable to make changes where they seemed necessary. If this willingness continues, future editions of the RSV may show a progressively improving text which ultimately will receive the approval of all Protestant church bodies.

St. Louis, Mo.

Our English Bible

By E. J. SALESKA

MANY Biblical scholars are agreed that September 30, 1952, will go down in American church history as a red-letter day. It was the publication date of the highly publicized Revised Standard Version of the Bible. Special services commemorating the event were held in more than three thousand communities. Coupled with this was the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the first printing, in Mainz, Germany, of the famous Gutenberg Bible. In recognition of this event the United States Government placed on sale on September 30 a special commemorative three-cent stamp.

The RSV is the first revision of the English Bible of any consequence to appear in the last half century and is the result of some fifteen years' work by a group of scholars representing the greater part of American Protestantism. These considerations alone make its publication another milestone in the history of the translated and printed Bible.

Some of the facts concerning the inception and publication of the RSV make interesting reading.

The International Council of Religious Education, which owns the copyright of the American Standard Version, believed that a new version was needed in order to eliminate antiquated language from the KJV and to give the English reader the benefit of recent archaeological, philological, and textual studies. A committee of Bible scholars was appointed, supplemented by a fifty-man advisory board, to survey and then undertake the work. Some of these had previously issued versions or translations of their own. As chairman, Luther A. Weigle, long-time dean of Yale Divinity School, was appointed in 1929. The work of revision did not get under way until 1937. Thirty-two men took some part in the work, but the actual revision and translation was in the hands of twenty-two men during the following fifteen-year period. Needless to say, all of the latest facilities for Biblical research were made available to this group. The Revised Standard New Testament made its appearance in 1946.

Probably no event in American church history has ever received such widespread publicity as the publication of the RSV, with radio, newspapers, periodicals, and television vying with one another in stressing its importance. It has been hailed as the biggest book project in American history. The one-million-copy first edition of September 30 was the largest ever taken by a publishing concern. It called for one thousand tons of paper, two thousand gallons of ink, over seventy-one miles of forty-inch cloth, and twenty million square inches of twenty-three-karat gold leaf. The first edition was sold out almost immediately.

In connection with a publication of such vast proportions, it is encouraging to note that, according to the *Christian Century*, the American Bible Society had its record year in 1951. Eric North, general secretary, reported that during the year the society distributed sixteen million volumes of Scripture, exceeding by 25 per cent the previous record set in 1945. Since its founding in 1816 the society has distributed a total of 415 million volumes of Scripture.

Here in St. Louis, at the annual meeting of the Gideons International recently, a budget of two and one-half million dollars was approved, aiming at the distribution of two million New Testaments to the Armed Forces, three million to children and young people, one hundred fifty thousand to nurses, seventy-five thousand to hospitals, in addition to two hundred fifty thousand to hotels and tourist camps.

In connection with the publication of the RSV, a recent survey has brought some interesting facts to light about Bible reading. Some 90 per cent of Protestant families own Bibles, and most of them possess more than one. They are usually kept in the living room, about half on the bookshelf, one fourth on a table. One third of the readers keep them at their bedside. It is estimated that 95 per cent read the Bible at some time, e. g., 40 per cent once a week, 20 per cent — chiefly Protestants — read it every day. Half of the readers "study it," 40 per cent read it as literature, and the rest both ways.

In view of all this publicity regarding the RSV and Bible distribution and use, a revived interest has been noted in the history of English Bible translation and versions. For this reason we append, for your convenience, a detailed tabular view of the genealogy of

the English Bible, basic sources used by revisers and translators, and pertinent notes which may be of interest.

The partly annotated bibliography, though far from complete, will nevertheless call attention to those sources available for further study of this interesting and vital subject.

Reference to a number of volumes of more recent vintage which make for a better understanding of the background of Biblical history and literature, may be helpful to those who may be inclined to further study in this direction. Dr. F. F. Bruce of the University of Sheffield, editor of the *Evangelical Quarterly*, has written a volume which appeared in 1950, published by Pickering & Inglis of London, entitled *The Books and the Parchments*. A recent work on text and versions has just been published by the University of Wales Press and authored by Bleddyn J. Roberts, titled *Old Testament Texts and Versions*. Those who have examined it state that it is really the first comprehensive book on this subject appearing in the English language and abreast of the latest discoveries and results of sound research. Quite comparable to the volume just mentioned is the one by Frederick G. Kenyon entitled *The Text of the Greek Bible*, first published in 1937 and now in a revised edition. This may be obtained through Blessings Book Store in Chicago. Another volume dealing with early manuscripts and versions, also by Kenyon, is entitled *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*. The fourth revised edition appeared in 1939.

OUR ENGLISH BIBLE GENEALOGY

MANUSCRIPT BIBLES AND PORTIONS

- 597—1382: Old English and Middle English; metrical paraphrases, glosses, and translations from the Latin Vulgate, etc. (Caedmon, Bede, Alfred, Aelfric.)
 1382: The Wycliffe-Hereford Bible.
 1388: A revision of Wycliffe by Purvey and others.

PRINTED BIBLES AND TESTAMENTS

- 1525: Tyndale's New Testament, from the original Greek, Luther, and Erasmus.
 (3,000 copies—printed in Europe)
 1530: Tyndale—portions of the Old Testament, Pentateuch, and Job
 —from the Hebrew.

- 1534: Tyndale's New Testament revised—also Old Testament portions.
- 1535: Tyndale's New Testament revised.
- 1535: Coverdale's Bible—from the Vulgate, Luther, Zuerich, Pagninus, Tyndale.
- 1536: Coverdale's Bible—second edition.
- 1537: Matthew's Bible (John Rogers), from Tyndale and Coverdale.
- 1539: Taverner's Bible—a private revision of Matthew's Bible plus the Vulgate and Greek text.
- 1539: Great Bible—first edition—from Matthew's, Muenster, Erasmus, Complutensian Polyglott (published in Paris and London).
- 1540: Great Bible—second edition—Preface by Cranmer.
- 1560: Genevan Bible, from original texts, Tyndale, Great Bible, and Beza. (First Bible with chapters and verses—Bible of the Pilgrim Fathers—140 editions.)
- 1568: Bishops' Bible, from Great Bible, Genevan, original texts.
- 1576: Tomson's—a revised Genevan Testament, from Genevan, Beza, Greek text.
- 1582: Rheims New Testament, from Vulgate and Genevan.
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Luther on Creation

A Study in Theocentric Theology

By HENRY W. REIMANN *

ALTHOUGH he was bred in a Church and society in which men tried with their works to appease the God whom theologians and philosophers had carefully thought out, Martin Luther returned to the Gospel. Here God took the initiative to rescue and redeem His sinful creatures through His Son. This has rightly been called a Copernican revolution in the realm of religion.

Just as Copernicus started with a geocentric, but reached a heliocentric conception of the physical world, Luther began with an anthropocentric or egocentric conception of religion, but came to a theocentric conception. In this sense, Luther is a Copernicus in the realm of religion.¹

But this theocentric emphasis is restricted by no means to the doctrine of justification by faith. For all of Luther's theology there is only one proper subject: Man as guilty on account of sin and God as the Justifier and Savior of sinful man. That this is eminently true of Luther's doctrine of Creation will be the subject of this study.

The Creator God for Luther was the Lord, the Holy One, the Almighty. Those words of the First Commandment: "the Lord, thy God," had made a deep impression on Luther. This Lord is the Creator, "who has given and constantly preserves to me my body, soul and life, members great and small, all my senses, reason, and understanding, and so on."² Holl is doubtless correct in affirming that Luther's reformation did not lie in changing any single doctrine.³ The Reformer built up anew from the very conception of God, the Creator Lord. The personal God, who is Creator, Redeemer, and Vivifier, is Luther's Lord. Whatever had no relation to this God had no place in his Christian thinking.

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This Creator Lord is the Holy One, the Almighty. After expounding the First Article of the Apostles' Creed, Luther adds: "Therefore this article ought to humble and terrify us all if we believed it. For we sin daily. . . ." ⁴ In Luther's theology the life of the holy Creator is no ideal toward which men strive. God's life is absolutely different from the sinful life of His creatures. ⁵ Here is determined opposition to medieval theology, which had never known a radical break between the life of God and the life of men. ⁶ The holy Creator is "wholly other."

Luther's understanding of God as almighty also forced him to part company with the Middle Ages. The world was no quiet order as it was for the Greeks and the Scholastics. The entire world is an unbroken witness to God's restless creative activity as Almighty Lord. ⁷ The trouble with people, Luther complained in *De Servo Arbitrio*, was that they do not consider what a restless sort of Mover God is in all His creatures. ⁸

This holy, almighty Creator Lord is the sovereign Source of all. He is the Source not only of man's repentance but of man's every action. He is Sovereign also over Satan and evil men. ⁹ This was Luther's position against Erasmus, who could not bring himself to see God in evil disturbances. Luther did, for God could not relinquish His sovereignty over the wicked without ceasing to be God. ¹⁰ There are no Neoplatonic aversions in Luther that prevent the living God from being what He is. ¹¹

It is evident, then, that this living Creator God is not the God of the Philosophers. God is not in the first place Thought, but Will and Action. Luther will have none of a God like Aristotle's, who in His self-sufficiency leaves so much to men. Some of the passages in *De Servo Arbitrio* appear to be definitely slanted against the Homeric view of a far-off God, who has left men and gone off to a banquet. ¹² But it was primarily because this philosophic view of God had obscured the Gospel that Luther rejected it so vehemently. ¹³ He wanted no far-off phantom for a God. His God was living, active, powerful — the Creator Lord who had come nigh to men through His Son in the promise of the Gospel.

Nevertheless the Creator is no familiar neighbor with whom man can talk on equal terms. That was why Luther was so stern with the "enthusiasts" who spoke with the high majesty of God as if

they were talking to a cobbler.¹⁴ He is the Creator; man is His creature. In answer to what the First Article of the Creed means, Luther replies: "This is what I mean and believe: that I am a creature of God. . . ." ¹⁵ For this reason God cannot be measured by human standards.¹⁶ Even though Luther knew that man cannot live without God, he would not say that man "needs" God. He is the Lord, whose commandments are to be obeyed unconditionally and without thought of reward.¹⁷ Even after the creation of the world God is within, beyond, and above all creatures. That means that He is still incomprehensible.¹⁸

This sovereign Creator Lord had created man and the world in the beginning. Here it is important to note that Luther was not first and foremost a systematician.¹⁹ His works from which references will be cited are exegetical treatises. And as an exegetical theologian Luther uses what Koeberle has called "a magnificent carelessness of expression."²⁰ Although such expressions may be painful for the critical theologian, they serve to emphasize the essentially religious view of Creation that Luther wished to set forth. What he wants to portray is the relationship between God and the world. God is the Creator, and man and the world are His creation.

Luther's religious view of Creation is plainly apparent in what he says about the Word of God. That Word was God's medium and instrument in performing the works of creation. Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity, had a definite part in Creation.²¹ Even in such physical phenomena as keeping the sea in its place, God used His Word,²² and the cause for the continuous propagation of the race is the same Word.²³ But Luther rejects any Logos speculation apart from the Logos *ensarkos*. He would not accept the idea that God's Word is a light that enlightens the reason of the heathen. That was a human, Platonic, philosophic thought that led away from Christ instead of to Him.²⁴ Nevertheless the Word who in the fullness of time was made flesh was the power of God through whom God had created the world.

The purpose of Creation was all important for Luther. Man was created to serve God. Even before the Fall man was to know why he had been created, namely, to acknowledge God and to glorify Him.²⁵ This was the purpose Luther found in the Sabbath observance. And this purpose of Creation is beautifully incorporated in

the *Small Catechism*: "I believe that God has made me . . . for all which it is my duty to thank and praise, to serve and obey Him." The creature has been created to live unto the Creator, and by very right of that creation God requires such service.²⁶

But in no point is Luther's religious emphasis brought out more strongly than when he lauds God's *present* creative work. The germination of seed in the botanical world is still the work of Creation,²⁷ and the same applies to the propagation of the human race. The creative Word is still efficacious today when mothers conceive and children are born.²⁸ Although people do not wonder at the ever-recurring story of human birth, it is still God's miracle.²⁹ On the one hand, Luther speaks as if God's creation in human birth were unconnected with the historical beginning of Creation, but on the other he holds that in God's sight he was born already at the beginning of the world.³⁰ At any rate, God is still Lord of His creation. The Creator is still at work.

Luther relates this natural birth to the spiritual rebirth of the Christian. Johann Haar has studied this side of Luther's theology in a short monograph entitled *Initium Creaturae Dei*, in which he analyzes particularly Luther's exegesis of James 1:18.³¹ It is Haar's conclusion that Luther does not speak of the natural birth of man without also speaking of the rebirth of the new man in Christ.³² God, the Creator of heaven and earth, is also the Creator of the new creature. As God began physical life in man and has preserved that life, so in the new creation the same Creator bestows the new life and sustains it. In both creative acts God's Word is active.³³

It would seem, then, that the Reformer understood two creations of God. Haar maintains that this is not true. There is only one Creation of God, but this unity becomes evident only to faith.³⁴ By faith in Christ God appears as One before whom all days are as one moment.³⁵ By that faith, from the understanding of the new life, the proper understanding of one's natural birth also is clear. Only the Christian can actually see God's Creation in the right perspective.³⁶ In all facets of the doctrine of Creation, Luther exhibited his religious interest.

That is not to say, however, that the Reformer was not bound by the historical account of the Creation in the beginning found in Genesis, or that he is in the company of some modern theologians

who emphasize the religious at the expense of the historical. Where Scripture had spoken, Luther was bound. Even on moot points like the problem of the waters of the firmament, Luther's advice was: "Remain in the words of the Holy Spirit."³⁷ Although he freely admitted that there was a lack of clarity on particulars,³⁸ that did not mean for him that the doctrine of Creation was unclear. Holy Scripture and the Word of God contained true wisdom for the all-important questions: Who has created all things and for what has He created them?³⁹

Creatureliness was basic to Luther's view of man. This meant first of all that man stood in a creaturely, dependent relationship to his Creator. It is noteworthy how Luther stresses again and again in the opening chapters of the Genesis commentary that even the holy Adam was a creature. The purpose of God's command not to eat of the fruit of the tree was that Adam and Eve might have an external worship and work of obedience toward God.⁴⁰ Even if there had been no sin, Adam would have set this commandment before his posterity.⁴¹ Even if man had not fallen, he would have continued to stand in a creaturely relation toward God, observing the Sabbath day and worshipping God.⁴²

Neither was it only a part of man, his "lower" self, which was in such a relation to the Creator. The whole man was God's creature. He is not the God of temporal possessions only but of all things. The Creator wanted man to worship Him with all his strength, with all his heart, with his whole self.⁴³ Recapturing the existentialism of the Scriptures, Luther regarded the total man as a creature of God.

But sin had entered the world, and sin affected the total man.⁴⁴ Although God had created a world which was to serve Him and which stood rooted in His Law, man had turned about and had become an idolater. The disposition of his mind has become ungodly "... seeking in all things, even in God Himself, the things that are its own."⁴⁵ Contrary to the Neoplatonic mysticism of the Middle Ages, Luther rejected the idea that the spirit of man had escaped this sin. The whole man was under God's judgment as an idolatrous sinner.⁴⁶

For this reason it seems as if Luther saw nothing good in man. All was mud; all was untillied ground.⁴⁷ As far as the creature's relationship to his God, there was nothing good in him. He could

not and would not let God be God.⁴⁸ Even man's reason, which Luther regarded as one of the Creator's best gifts, had become "the devil's whore," since it served the egocentricity of natural man.⁴⁹ The entire sex relation, God's *bona creatio*, was polluted by sin.⁵⁰ After the Fall, also the world which was corrupted through man's sin had become harmful. Sun and moon were clothed in sackcloth, and all creatures were deformed by sin.⁵¹

But God had made all things good, and He is still almighty Lord. Is He, then, responsible for this perversion of His good creation? While Luther's philosophic reasoning, especially in his controversy with Erasmus on freedom of the will, tended toward determinism, his basic argument was religious. Whatever judgment of *De Servo Arbitrio* one adopts,⁵² this much must be said. Even in the kingdom of evil where Satan rules, God the Lord is still omnipotent.⁵³ Moreover, Luther does not teach that God is the author of sin, either now or at the beginning of the world.⁵⁴ The sin that occurs in men's lives is not the fault of God but of men themselves. Men are always responsible.⁵⁵ However, in the last analysis Luther left the philosophic problem of sin and evil unsolved. God is the Lord. Man is a sinner.⁵⁶

But man's complete sinfulness never made him any less a creature of God.⁵⁷ Even after the Fall, Satan and man are not *nihil*. It is true that the sinner is turned toward his own desires. Nevertheless he remains God's creature, subject to God's omnipotent will.⁵⁸ Although man's apprehension of the divine will was distorted by the Fall, man's position as a creature of God, who is utterly dependent on God, remains even in his sinfulness. Because of sin, however, this creaturely relationship is not fully realized nor its goal actualized until the sinner is made a new creature through faith in the Son of God.

In this assertion that sinful man is still God's creature, Luther broke with the Neoplatonic and ascetic dualism of the Middle Ages, which had always negated man's physical being. Luther affirmed both mind and body as creaturely endowments of God. He even praises reason as one of God's best gifts to man.⁵⁹ Watson points out that the rough language Luther uses concerning reason "... is the measure of his indignation at the abuse and perversion of what he regards as one of the Creator's best gifts to His creatures."⁶⁰ The body, too, was a part of God's good creation.⁶¹ Luther has no con-

tempt for the natural, but rather a disciplinary culture that springs from reverence of the body as God's gift.⁶² For Luther both statements are true. The total man, including mind and body and physical gifts, is a good creature of God.⁶³ But man has perverted his entire being and turned his whole self into evil.⁶⁴

Similarly Luther also affirmed the world as God's creation. In rejecting the medieval division of life into spiritual and earthly duties, Luther praised the lowliest of earthly callings.⁶⁵ And when he extols earthly government and worldly offices, Carlson holds that "he is extolling creation as such."⁶⁶ Holl⁶⁷ believes that this extended to the natural sciences despite Luther's purported derision of Copernicus.⁶⁸ Rejoicing in God's goodness in Christ, Luther found joy in the world, in the splendor of the heavens, in the happy singing of the birds, in the majesty of the elements, in the riches of nature.⁶⁹ It is from man's use of the world, not from God's good creation, that ills and sorrows arise. Nevertheless, just as the Reformer never made man autonomous, so he never made the world autonomous.⁷⁰ God is the Creator and the world's Lord.

Luther has much to say about the relationship between Creator and creature, about the way in which and by which the one reaches the other. It is plain that Luther taught that sin had separated the creature from his Maker. But does Luther then teach a natural knowledge of God? The Reformer taught a twofold knowledge of God — a general and a particular knowledge.

All men have the general knowledge, namely, that there is a God, that He created heaven and earth, that He is just, that He punisheth the wicked. But what God thinketh of us, what His will is toward us, what He will give or what He will do to the end that we may be delivered from sin and death, and be saved (which is the true knowledge of God indeed), this they know not.⁷¹

It is this general knowledge of God which was called the Natural Knowledge of God in later Lutheran theology.

But, according to Luther, from this general, or natural, knowledge of God has sprung all idolatry.

For upon this proposition which all men do naturally hold, namely, that there is a God, hath sprung all idolatry, which without the knowledge of the Divinity, could never have come into the world.⁷²

The religion of the natural man is built on his natural knowledge of God, but it is a false religion, for it brings a false conception of God. It brings a false conception because of what man does with this knowledge. Men know that God is powerful, invisible, just, and good, but they do not worship Him as God.⁷³ Indeed, they cannot, since as sinners they are not in the right relationship with God.⁷⁴ Hence Luther's views on natural knowledge brought no continuity between man and God, but rather emphasized still more the distance between the holy Lord and His sinful creation.

The particular knowledge of God is the knowledge of the Creator in His Son. Without this knowledge man could never avoid idolatry. But this is not to assert an essential disharmony between the general and the particular knowledge of God. Luther explains himself in this way. We can be distantly acquainted with a man and even have much to do with him and still be ignorant of his personal attitude toward us. So also with the natural knowledge of God. It has given man a false picture of God because he stood in the wrong relationship to Him.⁷⁵

It is important neither to overemphasize nor to underemphasize what Luther says about this general knowledge of God. Protestant Orthodoxy had an imposing *theologia naturalis*. And as far as that was based on Luther's general knowledge of God, that there was an awareness of some *numen* in all men,⁷⁶ Orthodoxy was correct. But later Lutheran theology all too often carried on the scholastic tradition of positing a continuity between Creator and creature and of seeking the Creator through the works of creation.⁷⁷

What sets Luther off from the natural theology of the Scholastics and of the later dogmaticians is his view of the *larvae dei*. It is God Himself who actively confronts His creatures in the works of creation and in His Word.⁷⁸ The various orders in society, such as prince, magistrate, teacher, father, as well as the created world itself, are God's masks or veils through which He confronts men in their environment.⁷⁹ It is not as though men should use the created world to rise up to God. No ". . . God is One who comes down veiled in the *larvae* of His creatures and meets man precisely in the 'material substantial Sphere' of the external world."⁸⁰ Thus God's own revelation of Himself in Creation is the foundation of the general knowledge of God.

However, Luther is emphatic that only the Christian who has learned to know God properly can see God's face in the creation works. The natural man who has not seen God in Christ does not recognize Him, does not distinguish between the veils and God Himself.⁸¹ God actually confronts such a man in His masks, but that man turns this general knowledge of God into a lie. Koeberle summarizes Luther's position this way: Whoever looks into the heart of God in His Son can look on His face in Creation.⁸² The soul that trusts in the *revelatio specialis* will be led to the *revelatio generalis*.

It is the God who has revealed Himself in Christ with whom His creatures are to deal. Here man can see God's heart, His love for men in Christ, His very life which is so different from the life of men. It is true that God is the *Deus revelatus* also in Creation, but His *life* cannot be known through the Creation but only in Christ.⁸³ But knowing God in Christ the revelation in Creation is not excluded. In the works of Creation the Christian learns to see the same face of God that has been revealed to him in the person of Jesus Christ. Hence the Christian learns about Creation through God, his Creator Lord, and not the other way around.⁸⁴

But even the new relationship of faith does not obscure creatureliness. Although the Christian is God's child and heir by faith in Christ, he is still a creature. Luther certainly could write that the believers live in God and that the Christian becomes "ein Kuchen" with Christ.⁸⁵ But at the same time he extolled prayer as a wonderful way to acknowledge utter dependency on God,⁸⁶ and he stressed the fact that God wanted to form, and not to be formed.⁸⁷ Without any sense of conflict Luther asserted both the nearness of God in Christ and the creaturely distance from Him that still exists.⁸⁸ The Creator is always the Potter, and we are His clay.⁸⁹

The things that Luther wrote, preached, taught, and believed about Creation were no isolated fragments about a certain doctrine of the Christian faith. For him doctrine was not in the first place information about God, but the very witness of the activity of the living God reaching out to men. This activity centered in the love of Christ. If Luther's theology can be called Christocentric⁹⁰ (and surely it is), then his doctrine of Creation is equally Christocentric. Also in this area of theology all questions and problems center in

the God-Man and His saving work. Who the Creator is, how He performed His work of Creation, what He did for His sinful creatures, how He revealed Himself to them — the answers all revolved around Jesus Christ. Answering the question, What should the creature do in thinking about God? Luther replied: Let him occupy himself with the Incarnate God, namely, the crucified Jesus.⁹¹

Is, then, Luther's doctrine of Creation theocentric? Watson has the following quotation:

Only Christocentric theology is theocentric, because it takes seriously the revelation of God in Christ, and renounces the theoretical construction of God.⁹²

This is what Luther did. For him the religious relationship did not center in man but in God, who had made man, who justified him in Christ, who sent the Holy Spirit through Word and Sacrament to lead him to God's own heart. To all questions with which the creature would like to challenge the Creator Luther replied: "Deus est."⁹³

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FOOTNOTES

1. Philip S. Watson, *Let God Be God* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1950), p. 34.
2. Martin Luther, "The Large Catechism," *Concordia Triglotta*, edited by F. Bente (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), p. 681.
3. Karl Holl, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte* (seventh edition; Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1948), I, 2.
4. Luther, *op. cit.*, p. 683.
5. Holl, *op. cit.*, p. 58, note 1. Holl thanks Soederblom and Otto for working through the concept of the "Holy," but he holds that the distinctiveness of this concept in Luther is more apparent than either of these men will admit.
6. Carl Stange, "Die Gottesanschauung Luthers," *Zeitschrift fuer systematische Theologie*, VIII (1931), 68.
7. "Den das wortlin 'Mchtig' sol hie nit heyssen ein still ruhende macht. . . . Szondern ein wirkende macht und stetige tetickeit, die on unterlass geht ym schwanck und wirkt." *Weimar Edition*, VII, 574, 12. Quoted in Holl, *op. cit.*, p. 45, note 3.
8. "Non satis cogitantes, quam inquietus sit actor Deus in omnibus creaturis suis nullamque sinat feriari." Martin Luther, *De Servo Arbitrio*, *D. Martin Luthers Werke* (Weimar: Hermann Boehlaus Nachfolger, 1908), XVIII, 710. Hereafter this edition of Luther's works will be referred to as *WA*.
9. "Quando ergo Deus omnia movet et agit, necessario movet etiam et agit in Satana et impio." *Ibid.*, p. 709.
10. "Deus suam omnipotentiam non potest omittere propter illius aversionem." *Ibid.*, p. 710.

11. "Igitur Pius animus non exhorret audire, Deum esse in morte vel in inferno . . . imo cum scriptura testetur Deum esse ubique et replere omnia." *Ibid.*, p. 623.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 706. In a footnote the editor suggests that Luther may have been referring to the *Odyssey*, I, 22ff.
13. Cf. Jaroslav Pelikan, *From Luther to Kierkegaard* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c. 1950), p. 11f.
14. "Wir haben Propheten ym landt hyn und her, die leeren die leut allzu freydig trotzen, und reden mit der hohen Majestet als mit einem schusterknecht." *WA*, XII, 499, 15. Quoted in Holl, *op. cit.*, p. 58.
15. Luther, *Large Catechism*, *op. cit.*, p. 681.
16. "Die Vernunft will allezeit Gott hofmeistern, ob er Fug und Recht habe, will Gott messen nach ihrem Gesetze und Gedanken. . . . Aber das musst du aus deinem Kopfe lassen, wenn du von Gott reden willst, dass du kein Gesetz oder Mass auf Gott gibest; denn er ist nicht eine Creatur, er ist unermesslich." *Erlangen Edition*, 35, 165. Quoted by Stange, *op. cit.*, p. 56.
17. Watson, *op. cit.*, p. 62.
18. ". . . sentiamus Deum ante conditionem mundi fuisse incomprehensibilem in sua essentiali quiete, Nunc autem post creationem esse intra, extra et supra omnes creaturas, hoc est, etiam esse incomprehensibilem." Martin Luther, *Enarratio in Genesim*, *D. Martin Luthers Werke* (Weimar: Hermann Boehlaus Nachfolger, 1911), XLII, 9.
19. Pelikan, *op. cit.*, p. 14f.
20. Adolf Koeberle, *The Quest for Holiness*, translated from the third German edition by John C. Mattes (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, c. 1936), p. 79.
21. Luther, *Enarratio in Genesim*, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
22. "Sed Deus mare verbo suo repellit et facit planiciem illam extare." *Ibid.*, p. 26.
23. The cause for generation is ". . . nempe verbum Dei iubentis, quod dicit ad hunc maritum: Iam sanguis tuus fiat masculus, fiat foemella. Hoc verbum ratio nescit." *Ibid.*, p. 95.
24. Such thoughts are ". . . alliss noch menschlich, platonische und philosophische danken . . . denn er (der Euangelist) will das gottliche, almechtige, ewige wortt gottis nicht handeln, noch von yhm reden, denn alls ynn dem fleisch und blut, das auff erden gangen ist." *WA*, X, I, 1, p. 202. 7ff. Quoted in Johann Haar, *Initium Creaturae Dei* (Guetersloh: Verlag C. Bertelsmann, 1939), p. 41.
25. "Deinde ostenditur hic (sanctificatio Sabbati) quoque hominem praecipue esse conditum ad noticiam et cultum Dei." Luther, *Enarratio in Genesim*, *op. cit.*, p. 140.
26. "He may by right of creation require as due service, all things of us His creatures, created to live unto Him." *Sermons on the most interesting Doctrines of the Gospel* (London, 1830), p. 130. Quoted by Watson, *op. cit.*, p. 100, note 80.
27. "Quod autem nunc semina proveniunt, Id quoque est creationis opus plenum admiratione." Luther, *Enarratio in Genesim*, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
28. "Aber wenn Gott ein Wort spricht, so geschieht alsbald das, was gesagt wird. So sagt er zu meiner Mutter: Empfange, und sie empfaengt; zu mir sagt er: Werde geboren, und ich werde geboren." Luther, "Auslegung des 90. Psalms," *Dr. Martin Luthers Saemmtliche Schriften*, edited by Georg Walch (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1896), V, 757.

29. Cf. Luther, *Enarratio in Genesin*, *op. cit.*, p. 94f.
30. "... coram Deo sum generatus et multiplicatus statim in principio mundi, quia hic verbum, 'Et dixit Deus: Faciamus hominem' me quoque creavit." *Ibid.*, p. 57. According to Luther, it is the creative Word that links the creation in the beginning to his own creation. "Ita Deus per verbum suum currit ab initio usque ad finem mundi." *Ibid.*
31. Haar, *op. cit.*, p. 28f., where he makes the point that a particular discussion of the "new creature" is lacking in Luther's works but that he discusses this under James 1:18. Haar refers to *WA* XVIII, 754, 12ff. and XLIV, 767, 29ff.
32. Haar, *op. cit.*, p. 52.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 37—44, *passim*.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 19. Cf. *WA* IV, 149, 29.
36. Cf. *WA* XLVI, 616, 36ff. Haar, *op. cit.*, p. 53f., says that it is only to the Christian to whom Luther appeals not to despise God's creation.
37. "Oportet enim nos servare phrasim scripturae sanctae, et manere in verbis Spiritus sancti." Luther, *Enarratio in Genesin*, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
38. "... relicta ista generali notitia nobis, quod scimus, mundum cepisse et conditum esse per Deum ex nihilo. . . . In particularibus autem sunt plurima, de quibus ambigitur." *Ibid.*, p. 3.
39. "Ergo discamus veram sapientiam esse in scriptura sancta et in verbo Dei. Id enim non solum de materia, non solum de forma totius creaturae sed etiam de efficienti et finali causa, de principio et de fine omnium rerum docet: Quis creaverit, et ad quid creaverit." *Ibid.*, p. 94.
40. "Discamus itaque, necesse fuisse homini sic condito, ut omnes reliquas creaturas viventes in manu haberet, ut agnosceret creatorem suum, ut ageret creatori suo gratias, ut etiam externum aliquem cultum et certum opus obedientiae haberet." *Ibid.*, p. 72.
41. "Haec igitur arbor scientiae boni et mali, seu locus, in quo magno numero huiusmodi arbores fuerunt consitae, fuisset Ecclesia, ad quam Adam cum posteritate sua die Sabbato convenisset, et post refectionem ex arbore vitae praedicasset Deum et laudasset eum pro tradito dominio omnium creaturarum super terram." *Ibid.*, p. 80.
42. "Si Adam in innocentia stetisset, tamen habuisset septimum diem sacrum, hoc est, eo die docuisset posteros de voluntate et cultu Dei, laudasset Deum, gratias egisset, obtulisset, etc." *Ibid.*, p. 60.
43. "Neque enim Deus noster tantum temporalium Deus est sed omnium. Necque tibi Deus esse aut coli volet dimidio humero aut claudicante pede, sed totis viribus totoque corde." Luther, *De Servo Arbitrio*, *op. cit.*, p. 726.
44. Pelikan, *op. cit.*, p. 16. Cf. *WA*, II, 585—7 and XXXVI, 478—696.
45. *WA* V, 38, 11ff. Quoted in Watson, *op. cit.*, p. 139.
46. Holl, *op. cit.*, pp. 61—3.
47. "Sed de uno in omnibus hominibus aequaliter impotente loquimur, quod non nisi limus, non nisi terra inculta est, ut quod non possit velle bonum." Luther, *De Servo Arbitrio*, *op. cit.*, p. 706.
48. "... non potest homo naturaliter velle deum esse deum, immo vellet se esse deum et deum non esse deum." *WA* I, 225. Quoted in Pelikan, *op. cit.*, p. 147, note 127.
49. Watson, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

50. "Bona quidem est creatio, bona benedictio, sed per peccatum sic sunt haec corrupta, ut sine pudore coniuges non possint iis uti." Luther, *Enarratio in Genesin*, *op. cit.*, p. 75.
51. "Haec omnia post peccatum deformata sunt, ita ut creaturae omnes, etiam Sol et Luna quasi saccum induisse videantur, et quae prius bonae fuerunt, postea sint factae noxiae propter peccatum." *Ibid.*, p. 68.
52. Swedes like Runestam and Bohlin say that Luther's doctrine of God's omnipotence is metaphysical determinism, where Luther leaves the personal field. But another Swedish Luther scholar, Ragnar Bring, does not agree. In *Dualismen hos Luther* he sets forth the opinion that the solution lies in Luther's conception of the Law: that God's Law produces in man the devil's work. Cf. Edgar M. Carlson, *The Reinterpretation of Luther* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, c. 1948), p. 58 ff. For a full discussion of the Swedish Luther research that points to the dualistic pattern in Luther cf. *ibid.*, pp. 48—57.
53. "Gott bedient sich zwar des Teufels, um uns zu plagen und zu toedten, aber der Teufel vermag dies nicht, wenn Gott nicht wollte, dass die Suende auf diese Weise bestraft wuerde." Luther, *Auslegung des 90. Psalms*, *op. cit.*, p. 754.
54. In Paradise: "Nondum enim erat peccatum: Quia Deus peccatum non creavit." Luther, *Enarratio in Genesin*, *op. cit.*, p. 83. At the present time: "Licet enim Deus peccatum non faciat, tamen naturam peccato, subtracto spiritu, vitiata non cessat formare et multiplicare." *De Servo Arbitrio*, *op. cit.*, p. 708.
55. "In nobis, id est, per nos Deum operari mala, non culpa Dei, sed vitio nostro, qui cum simus natura mali, Deus vero bonus." *Ibid.*, p. 711.
56. Holl, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
57. "Haec rata et certa sunt, si credimus omnipotentem esse Deum, deinde impium esse creaturam Dei." Luther, *De Servo Arbitrio*, *op. cit.*, p. 710.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 709.
59. Watson, *op. cit.*, p. 86 where the author refers to *WA* X, 1, p. 207.
60. Watson, *op. cit.*, p. 87.
61. At least in the state of innocence. "Nulla enim pars corporis fuit sordida in statu innocentiae; non fuit foetor in excrementis, non aliae foeditates, sed omnia fuerunt pulcherrima, sine ulla offensione organorum sensuum, et tamen fuit animalis vita." Luther, *Enarratio in Genesin*, *op. cit.*, p. 84.
62. Koeberle, *op. cit.*, p. 191.
63. Concerning Eccl. 7:2, which calls the day of death better than the day of life, Luther wrote: "Si coram deo [sic] loqui vellem: qui facit nos homines et vult nos vivere, tam impiissime dicerem." *WA* XX, 125, 13 f. Quoted in Haar, *op. cit.*, p. 58.
64. Carlson mentions that the phrase "omnia bona, sed sunt in abusu" occurs frequently in Luther. Cf. Edgar M. Carlson's, "Luther's Conception of Government," *Church History*, XV (December, 1946), 270, note 52. He refers to *WA* XL, 2, p. 203, 7 and to I, 174.
65. Holl, *op. cit.*, p. 102.
66. Carlson, "Luther's Conception of Government," *op. cit.*, p. 261.
67. Holl, *op. cit.*, p. 108. Holl quotes as follows from Luther: "Vehementer enim et toto coelo errare censeo, qui philosophiam et naturae cognitionem inutilem putant theologia." *Enders* III, 245, 36.

68. Pelikan's view is that Luther's cosmology was well developed for its day and represented the best thought of the period. For additional material on this subject cf. Pelikan, *op. cit.*, p. 5f. and p. 122, note 16. Werner Elert discusses in detail the oft-quoted passage from the *Tischreden* in which Luther condemns Copernicus. Elert points out that Luther's influence was great enough to persuade the Lutheran princes to suppress Copernicus' teachings had he wanted to. The passage so often quoted is not only the only one in which Luther refers to Copernicus, but it is highly suspect, since it first was reported twenty-seven years after it was supposed to have been spoken. Cf. Werner Elert, *Morphologie des Luthertums* (Muenchen: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1931), I, 372.
69. Holl, *op. cit.*, p. 89.
70. Cf. *St. Louis Edition* III, 1675, where Luther emphatically states that the world has no being in itself.
71. *Galatians Commentary*, 4, 8ff. Quoted in Watson, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
72. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
73. Holl, *op. cit.*, p. 54, note 1, brings this quotation from Luther's Roemerbrief II, 19, 3ff. ". . . in hoc ergo erraverunt, quod hanc divinitatem non nudam reliquerunt et coluerunt, sed eam mutaverunt et applicuerunt pro votis et desyderiis suis. et unusquisque divinitatem in eo esse voluit, qui sibi placeret, et sic dei veritatem mutaverunt in mendacium. cognoverunt ergo, quod divinitatis sive eius, qui est deus sit esse potentem, invisibilem, iustum, immortalem, bonum; ergo cognoverunt invisibilia dei sempiternamque virtutem eius et divinitatem. hec maior syllogismi practici, hec syntheresis theologica est inobscurabilis in omnibus. sed in minore errabant."
74. Watson, *op. cit.*, p. 74f.
75. *Ibid.*
76. "Even the heathen have this awareness (sensus) by a natural instinct, that there is some supreme deity (numen) . . . as Paul says in Romans 1, that the Gentiles knew God by nature." *WA XLII*, 631, 36ff. Quoted in Watson, *op. cit.*, p. 80.
77. *Ibid.*, p. 77 and p. 135.
78. "Ideo Deus quoque se non manifestat nisi in operibus et verbo, quia haec aliquo modo capiuntur. . . ." Luther, *Enarratio in Genesin*, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
79. Watson, *op. cit.*, pp. 112—4.
80. *Ibid.*, p. 115. J. Baille, in *Our Knowledge of God*, p. 178ff., tries to do justice to both aspects of Luther's thought by calling this revelation a "mediated immediacy." Cf. Watson, *op. cit.*, p. 80.
81. "This the natural man cannot see; but the spiritual man only discerneth . . . the veil of God from God Himself. . . . But here wisdom is required, which can discern the veil from God Himself; and this wisdom the world hath not. The covetous man, hearing 'that man liveth not by bread alone' . . . eateth the bread, but he seeth not God in the bread. . . . And thus he honoreth not the Creator, but the creatures, not God, but his own belly." *Galatians Commentary*, 2, 6. Quoted in Watson, *op. cit.*, p. 80.
82. Koeberle, *op. cit.*, p. 132.
83. Stange, *op. cit.*, p. 53f.
84. "Wer Gott erkennt, der erkennt auch die Kreatur, versteht dieselbige und hat sie auch lieb." *Erlangen Edition*, 5, 304. Quoted in Stange, *op. cit.*, p. 62.
85. Holl, *op. cit.*, p. 81. But Werner Elert, in a careful scrutiny of the relevant passages, challenges this phrase as a cardinal proof for Luther's Christ-mysticism. Cf. Elert, *op. cit.*, p. 152, footnote.

86. Watson, *op. cit.*, p. 40f.
87. "Deus vult formare, non formari." *WA* XIII, 39, 5. Quoted in Holl, *op. cit.*, p. 55, note 3.
88. So Gustav Aulen in *Den kristna gudsbilden*, p. 244. "In a sense, the distance increases with the nearness. . . . The closer God approaches man, the more intimately He binds the bonds of fellowship, the more clearly and inescapably the distance between man and God becomes simultaneously apparent." Quoted in Carlson, *The Reinterpretation of Luther*, *op. cit.*, p. 149.
89. "Quamquam autem haec cum brutis communis generatio est, non tollit tamen illam gloriam originis nostrae primae, quod sumus vascula Dei ab ipso Deo ficta, quod ipse est figulus noster, nos autem lutum eius, sicut Iesaias 64. loquitur. Idque non solum ad originem nostram attinet, sed per omnem vitam et usque ad mortem et in sepulchram manemus lutum huius Figuli." Luther, *Enarratio in Genesin*, *op. cit.*, p. 64.
90. That is Watson's conclusion, *op. cit.*, p. 96.
91. "Occupet vero sese cum Deo incarnato seu (ut Paulus loquitur) cum Ihesu crucifixo." Luther, *De Servo Arbitrio*, *op. cit.*, p. 689.
92. Obendieck, *Der Teufel bei Martin Luther*, p. 30. Quoted in Watson, *op. cit.*, p. 101, note 113.
93. "Deus est, cuius voluntatis nulla est causa nec ratio, quae illi ceu regula et mensura praescribatur, cum nihil sit illi aequale aut superius, sed ipsa est regula omnium. . . . Creaturae voluntati causa et ratio praescribitur sed non Creatoris voluntati, nisi alium illi praefeceris creatorem." Luther, *De Servo Arbitrio*, *op. cit.*, p. 712.

The Grace of God in the Old Testament

By WALTER R. ROEHRS

III

(Concluded)

AFTER making a rapid survey of the terms that the Old Testament employs to denote the grace of God, we need to say that these words are not the fleeting sound of empty vocables. Nor do they describe an abstraction in the nature of a Platonic idea. They tell what God does to save men from the curse of their separation from Him and to bring them a life in blessed communion with Him. Our next task is, therefore, to trace how the grace of God entered the lives of the Old Testament believers to bring them salvation.

The Old Testament records how God revealed Himself in order to put His grace into operation. Koenig says of the gracious purpose of God's revelation:

By endowing man with the image of God (Gen. 1:26), he was created to God (*auf Gott hin*), as Augustine puts it in superb succinctness: "*Tu nos fecisti ad te.*" Thereby a consonance with God and an eventual reunion with Him is made the supreme purpose of mankind.¹

Oehler stresses the meshing of word and deed in the revelation of God's grace:

And because revelation aims at the restoration of full communion between God and man, it is directed *to the whole of man's life*. It does not complete its work by operating either exclusively or mainly upon man's faculties of knowledge; but constantly advancing, it produces and shapes the communion of God and man, as well by divine witness in word as by manifestations of God in the visible world, the institution of a commonwealth and its regulations, revelations of God within, the sending of the Spirit, and spiritual awakenings; and all this so that a *constant relation exists between the revealing history of salvation and the revealing word*, inasmuch as each divine fact is preceded by the word which discloses the counsel of God (Amos 3:7) now to be completed; and again, the word of God arises from the completed fact, and testifies thereto.²

The same operative and concrete aspect of the revelation of God for the gracious deliverance of man is put thus by Haevernicks:

Salvation in the Old Testament does not appear as a mere idea, thought, doctrine, it is at the same time something that is done. Essentially and in principle it is indeed the object of hope. But the latter does not float in mid air, it does not lack actual points of contact in history. It rests on a definite historical basis, it is grounded on a succession of deeds and experiences in life, in history, which can by no means be viewed or explained as the mere result of human activity, it is brought into the most intimate connection with institutions and practices which contribute effectively in enforcing the Spirit and thus form the basis for the doctrine of salvation.³

It can therefore be said that Old Testament history is God's grace *in actu*. The over-all *Tendenz* of the Old Testament records has but one goal; it moves with singleness of purpose toward the establishment of God's Kingdom of Grace among men. It alone among ancient records of events is controlled and unified by a teleological purpose of history. All other accounts of antiquity are stories, but not history (*Geschichten*, but not *Geschichte*). Old Testament history can therefore be said to be stories and accounts written in the future tense. The past has meaning for the future; history faces in the direction of that which is to come. It is advent history. God is not merely recognized as guiding and controlling the events of history and the fate of man. Everything that happens is a part of a projected plan: the design of God's grace to redeem man from the death of God-lessness and to restore him to life with God.

This teleological character of Old Testament history also accounts for the selection of the material in its narrative. Whatever does not serve to illustrate and portray this purpose of God's dealing with man is omitted although the event as such may appear as important or decisive in the annals of human events. This is true even of the history of God's chosen people. Israel does not exist as a nation in order to glorify the seed of Abraham as a people. As soon as Israel wants to be something other than the scaffolding in time of God's gracious salvation, it ceases to have a reason for existence: "Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto Me, O Children of Israel?" (Amos 9:7.) Israel is to be the structure, built by the "plumbline"

of His design (Amos 7:8), in which His grace tabernacles; and when Israel builds its own mansions, they no longer square with the foundations of God's history and hence must fall: "I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces; therefore will I deliver up the city with all that is therein" (Amos 6:8). God's chosen people cost Him much: He called them, nurtured them with a mother's care, He literally moved heaven and earth and sea to protect and sustain them; but nothing is too expensive in His economy of grace. Israel must drop out of history when it fails to walk the way that leads to the goal of history: the salvation of mankind.

Because Old Testament history is thus oriented to the future, it tells the story not only of coming events in time, including Good Friday and Easter, but also events beyond history to the *eschaton*, the end. In doing so it remains true to its philosophy of history. In eschatology God's gracious purposes are fully and completely realized. The same holds true of that genre of Old Testament writing that is called apocalyptic. Here the purposes of God are merely laid down somewhat more schematically. Nothing will be able to thwart God in carrying out the establishment of His kingdom. The powers inimical to His plan of history, or anti-Christ, must perish.

We can therefore put it very briefly: Old Testament history is *Heilsgeschichte*, and that can only mean *Gnadengeschichte*, a history of grace.

How did God implement His gracious purpose? By what means did He bring the revelation of His grace to men?

As already intimated, God's deeds of grace in the Old Testament can very well be put into the framework of one word: the covenant. Through the covenant God again established contact with man after man had excluded himself from communion with Him by sin and thus was subject to death. For to be without God is being dead in the absolute sense of the word. Every provision therefore that God makes to reunite man with Him is an essential part of the *Heilsgeschichte*.

We need to remember again at this point that the covenant established a relationship of grace. The covenant could come into existence only because God is gracious. He alone took, and only could take, the initiative in bringing about this *rapprochement*. The

covenant is not a bargained agreement between two equals: the party of the first and the party of the second. We never read therefore that God *and* man established a covenant, but always that God made a covenant *with* man. Although the covenant is an event in history, it is an allegorical term to the extent that it expresses in human concepts how God healed the breach that divides man and Him and lays down the terms on the basis of which communion with God can be renewed. The foundation upon which rests the whole structure of this new Father-son relationship is the gracious condescension of the holy God. He contracted purely out of Fatherly divine goodness and mercy; it was unmotivated love. There was nothing in man to call forth a response of love in God. As a sinner, man was the very opposite of what God loved. And yet God bent down to lift this ugly, putrid creature from his destruction and make him beautiful in His sonship. The term covenant therefore when pressed is not adequate to describe the transaction between God and man if we think of it merely in human terms.

When did God establish this covenant?

In the first promise of His grace after the Fall there is no explicit reference to a covenant relationship. God, indeed, obligates Himself in the promise of the protevangel to deliver man from the power of sin and restore him to life. But no mention is made of stipulations that man is to meet. Man's part is merely the acceptance of this undeserved gift of grace. But from the immediate subsequent history it becomes quite clear that if man is to be a partner and beneficiary of this covenanted grace, God demands from him a total response. Whoever accepts the proffered pardon of sins cannot presume on this grace to love sin; he must demonstrate his belonging to God in godly living. Abel did this; Cain did not.

But beginning with Abraham, the revelation of God's grace is put *expressis verbis* in terms of a covenant. Considerable space is devoted even to describe the ceremony that attended the establishment of this covenant. But again there are no clauses of obligation mentioned that man assumes in this divine pact with the exception of the provision of circumcision. It is Paul who tells us what Abraham's part in this contract was: Abraham believed. Abraham became a signatory to this covenant by taking God's gift of grace and by standing fast without wavering in his reliance on this grace. To

cling in faith to God's grace, however, in this instance also presupposes that man enters into the orbit of God's will. He must disregard the claims of his own flesh to live to himself and his sinful desires; he walks with God. In the history of the patriarchs we see that man keeps the covenant and can claim its gracious provisions only as he gives himself to God in complete trust and submission.

In the Book of Exodus—almost at the beginning of the Old Testament—we have the detailed account how God adopted additional measures to put His *Heilsplan* into execution by means of a covenant. From the time of Moses until the time was fulfilled and the new covenant in the blood of Christ was established which makes the old covenant effective, the Old Testament *Heilsgeschichte* runs in the deep channel of the Sinai covenant.

In understanding and evaluating this covenant it is necessary to emphasize one aspect that is usually disregarded. It has provisions perplexing in the detail of minutiae and almost endless in number. Yet this whole imposing structure rises on the foundation of the faith covenant with Abraham. God reveals Himself to Moses as the "God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob" (Ex. 3:6). God sends Moses to his people to tell them: "And I have also established My covenant with them [the patriarchs], to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers. And I have also heard the groaning of the Children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered My covenant. . . . And I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you a God; and ye shall know that I am the Lord, your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage; I am the Lord." (Ex. 6:4, 5, 7, 8.) The promise made to Abraham is still in effect. The basis of this agreement is the same grace of God that operated in the covenant of Abraham.⁴

Nevertheless the Sinai covenant is a protracted recital of laws and requirements incumbent on Israel. To these exactions were affixed severe threats of punishment in case of transgression. In view of this heavy yoke of the Law that is thus imposed on Israel, does this covenant still deserve to be called an act of God's grace?

In the first place, the Law indeed has the promise of life attached to it. Jesus sums up all the requirements of the Law and then quotes from the Lawbook of Moses: "This do, and thou shalt live." But since no one is able to meet the demands of the Law: "to love God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind, and to love thy neighbor as thyself," the Law in reality is not a means of salvation, but can only accuse, curse, condemn, and kindle the wrath of God. It cannot effect a blessed communion with God; it only widens the rift between God and man and exposes man to the full condemnation of death.

This covenant of the Law, however, serves God's plan of salvation. It quickens in man the consciousness of his sin; it tears from under his feet every basis of recognition before God; it compels him to cast himself unreservedly on the mercy of God if he is not to be consumed in God's wrath. In teaching man the way of salvation in the Old Testament, God found it necessary to take this course, the course of almost countless laws, in order to eradicate in man every vestige of self-sufficiency and to extinguish any smoldering spark of self-righteousness. Thus the Law became—and is—the *paidagogos* to Christ. And who will say that man today does not need to learn this lesson from the Old Testament?

Proksch calls attention to the Old Testament sacrifice as a constant reminder of sin. "The sacrifices of reconciliation (*Versöhnungsoffer*), whether it was the burnt offering, sin offering, or guilt offering, had very deep roots which lie in the longing for redemption. As *opus operatum* it was rejected by the Prophets, but as a sacrifice of confession it was retained to the end of the Old Testament religion. It kept alive in Israel the consciousness of its sinfulness in the need of the remission of sins, constantly revived in the cultic procedures of the Temple."⁵

The Sinai covenant also had this "pedagogical" element, that it was a constant demonstration *ad oculos* of the need of substitutionary shedding of blood if access to a gracious God is to be gained. The prescriptions regarding sacrifice demand compliance in all their multifarious complexity and detail; they are laws. But they are not the arbitrary demands of God to demonstrate His authority and to display tyrannical power in order to exact obedience. The awakened conscience of the Israelite was to learn that a sacrificial atonement

was necessary to eliminate sin and that God does not cover (*kipper*) sin without the shedding of blood. At the same time it was made abundantly clear that these sacrifices did not automatically effect the removal of sin, yes, that the shedding of the blood of bulls and goats did not suffice to bring about an atonement with God. While the ritual of sacrifice was a visual demonstration of the restoration of God's grace, there is not the slightest hint that the cult possessed magical powers.

Here again we have a feature, and a very fundamental one, in the religion of the Old Testament that sets it apart from every religion of Israel's environment. Fichtner makes this pointed remark: "The people, visited by the wrath of God, are denied those means of averting the wrath which Israel's environment recognized and applied: magical practices to placate God (*Beschwoerung Gottes*)."⁶ And Prosch puts it this way: "When God 'covers' sin (Ps. 65:4; 78:38; cf. Is. 6:7; 22:14; Dan. 9:24), then He no longer regards it, but forgives it. . . . Usually the priest is recognized as the mediator in bringing about this covering, which, of course, is effective only because it rests on God's ordinance; there is not the slightest hint of a magical power of the priest over God. The purpose is reconciliation between God and the nation for whose benefit the priest performs the covering; for the guilt of man is a chasm between God and the nation which cannot be bridged by human power. The means of propitiation is the sacrifice, and above all a burnt sacrifice, the sin sacrifice, and the guilt sacrifice, i. e., the animal sacrifice which entailed the giving up of life."⁷

This would be the place to enlarge on the significance of the Old Testament sacrifice as a type of Christ and then to proceed to trace the golden thread of Messianic promise through the passages of the Old Testament. The blood of Jesus Christ alone is the signature which makes the covenant of the Old Testament an instrument of grace. Without Calvary the covenant of Sinai would indeed be the Law that condemns. This is the incompleteness of the Old Testament that Christ came to fulfill. And this is the hope that the Old Testament holds out and to which it points. But we cannot tarry to develop this big topic. We have tried to restrict ourselves to the means that God employed in bringing His grace into the lives of the Old Testament saints.

IV

But because the Old Testament is incomplete without the New Testament, the grace of God in the Old Testament is said to be lacking also in the perfection of the New Testament. We shall devote a final section of our paper to a brief discussion of this alleged difference.

An inferior quality is ascribed to the grace of God in the Old Testament because the Sinai covenant did not succeed in establishing a full coverage for all sins. It is deficient quantitatively because it expressly expiates only those shortcomings which are committed out of ignorance or weakness or by mistake. Sins against God done with an "uplifted hand" (*jad ramah*), that is, intentional sins in conscious rebellion against God, remain unatoned and are punished by death or expulsion from the people (Num. 15:30, 31). There are violations of the Law, then, for which the covenant makes no propitiatory provision. Condemned and unforgiven, the culprit can only suffer the consequences. Even the rites of the great Day of Atonement did not suffice to redeem him from death.

There can be no gainsaying that such a distinction is made in the Mosaic legislation. A number of considerations, however, must be borne in mind.

It is significant that even the Catholic scholar Heinisch makes the point that this very limitation was to serve as a warning not to overestimate the efficacy of the sacrifice itself. These provisions were to counterbalance the notion that the sacrifice as such was capable of squaring man's account with God and paying the debt.⁸

Furthermore, we must remember that the decree of capital punishment for these offenses was a part of the theocratic legislation; they are at the same time civil or political laws. If such a lawbreaker repented and pleaded for mercy before God in a prayer such as Psalm 51, is it a foregone conclusion that he would have been excluded from God's forgiveness? The "state" indeed inflicted the prescribed punishment for the crime just as a murderer today pays the extreme penalty whether he is penitent or not. There is no evidence to prove that a penitent Old Testament malefactor, even if his sins were as scarlet, could not hope that the gates of Paradise would swing wide to receive him.

For the Old Testament nowhere denies a penitent sinner direct access to the heavenly mercy seat of God which was merely symbolized in gold in the Holiest of Holies. God does not impose any limitations on His forgiving grace in the Old Testament. It is a grace without reservations; it can cope with sins that cry to heaven and entail the death sentence. The history of Israel bears abundant witness that the most wicked criminal could not only implore the grace of God, but could also rely on the gracious assurance: "The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die" (2 Sam. 12:13). The penitential Psalms especially are eloquent evidence that also in the Old Testament it was true that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. 5:20). Eichrodt calls attention especially to Psalms 40, 51, and 69 and stresses the certainty of forgiveness also as God's direct gift, without the intervening agency of the rites of sacrifice. "The unlimited grace of God, which is not guaranteed by any earthly act, is steadfastly maintained."⁹ After reviewing several terms that denote God's redemptive activity in the Old Testament, Proksch says: "Also the specific word for forgiveness (*salah*) appears to be related etymologically to the Akkadian *salabu*, 'to sprinkle,' and hence to point to a cultic rite. Yet it is just as characteristic of this verb that it was completely divested of its ritual sense and became the expression of God's untrammelled forgiveness. Thus it becomes the designation of forgiveness of grace in the Prophets and the literature dependent on them although it was also retained in the *Niphal* in the language of the cult."¹⁰

Even the provisions of the covenant contain expressions that point to an all-inclusive forgiveness. According to Lev. 16:30 the Day of Atonement has this significance: "For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you that ye may be clean from *all* your sins before the Lord."

But Old Testament grace is also said to be defective qualitatively. The charge is made that forgiveness in the Old Testament is merely a *paresis*, a pushing aside of sin, but not an *aphesis*, a total removal of sin. But such a differentiation cannot be proved.

In this matter we can again refer to the very recent theology of the Old Testament by Proksch, who says that: "The inexhaustible grace of the covenant God promised the granting of an extraor-

dinary removal of sin (*auszerordentliche Suendentilgung*)."¹¹ Then he proceeds to quote some passages that proclaim this total erasure of sin.

And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more (Jer. 31:34).

He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us: He will subdue our iniquities; and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea (Micah 7:19).

If these and similar passages do not establish a grace of God that does not merely suspend judgment on sin, but goes all the way in removing sin out of sight, then human language simply is not adequate to express any divine truth.

Another defect is said to consist in this, that the Old Testament indeed proclaims God's acts of grace in man's behalf but does not hold out the blessed assurance of a state of grace (*Gnadenstand*). But certainly the meaning and the purpose of the covenant is basically a continuing relationship to God. God pledges unceasing faithfulness. And is not the Old Testament believer told again and again that as a partner in this covenant he can rest assured that its promises accompany him through life to the end? God has obligated Himself by oath to maintain this status: "I will be your God, and ye shall be My people." To be in this covenant relationship to God can therefore only mean the same as being in an unbroken state of grace.

There are other factors that are urged in an attempt at differentiation of the grace of God in the Old Testament from that of the New Testament; but if what has been said is conceded to be correct, then all other objections must likewise vanish.

The question regarding the grace of God is indeed only one of the factors that comes up for consideration in an evaluation of the Old Testament, but it is central and basic. Hence the words of Hans Hellbardt are very much to the point:

The Old Testament is not the "Law" which is succeeded in the New Testament by the Gospel. . . . The covenant was based on a *pactum dei* with His Son in eternity. . . . There are not two

Gospels. There are not two messages heard simultaneously: the one that God is favorably inclined to us because of our moral efforts, the cleanness of our hands, or for the sake of the oxen and goats; the other for the sake of the sacrifice of Christ; in the one instance, because in the exile and many kinds of perils we have "received double of the Lord's hand" for all our sins; in the other, because Jesus made amends for us. If one differentiates thus, then one must let the Jews be what they are and must also surrender the Old Testament to them.¹²

The sacrifice of Christ for the sins of the world is God's eternal plan of salvation. Faith in this atonement was counted unto righteousness also before Good Friday. Since no other way of salvation is revealed, there is no other grace of God except in Christ Jesus.

Did the Old Testament believer understand all this? This question deserves a longer answer than we can devote to it here. Permit me, in conclusion, merely to ask you to remember that the Holy Spirit did not begin His ministrations on Pentecost Day. Can anyone today, even though he knows every detail of the life of Jesus of Nazareth, call Him Lord except by the Holy Ghost? Faith, before as well as after Good Friday, is not a human achievement. As He bridged the gap in time before Calvary, so He still must span the centuries that separate us from Good Friday in order to make us the beneficiaries of the Atonement. Emphasizing the work of the Holy Spirit as necessary in the hearts of the ancestors of Christ according to the flesh as well as in us who live in these latter days, Kurt-Dietrich Schmidt says:

He [the Holy Spirit] it is who bridges the gap in time that intervenes between us and the *Christus Incarnatus* and makes salvation a contemporary possession. Thus the question is raised by Luther regarding the present appropriation of the salvation achieved once in past time; here also is Luther's answer to this question: This is the function of the Holy Spirit, to transmit that salvation which exists only in Christ to us who live after the event (*den Nachfabren*).¹³

NOTES

1. Eduard Koenig, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, p. 52.
2. Gust. Fr. Oehler, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, p. 25.
3. H. Haevernick, *Vorlesungen ueber die Theologie des Alten Testaments*, p. 114.
4. The relationship of these two covenants to each other is very clearly set forth by P. Peters in articles appearing in the *Theologische Quartalschrift*,

Milwaukee, Wis., October, 1942, pp. 253—282, entitled *Diatheke in the Old and New Testaments*.

5. Otto Proksch, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, p. 656.
 6. In Kittel's *Woerterbuch*, s. v. δαγγή.
 7. *Op. cit.*, p. 559.
 8. Paul Heinisch, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, tr. William Heidt, p. 208.
 9. Walther Eichrodt, *Man in the O. T.*, Tr. by K. and R. Gregor Smith, London, SCM Press, 1951.
 10. *Op. cit.*, p. 666.
 11. *Ibid.*, p. 311.
 12. Hans Hellbardt, *Das Alte Testament und das Evangelium*, Muenchen, 1938, pp. 9 and 30. Although the author does not correctly differentiate Law and Gospel, he stresses the grace of God in Christ Jesus as the only way of salvation, as these brief quotations indicate.
 13. Kurt-Dietrich Schmidt, *Luthers Lehre vom Heiligen Geist in Schrift und Bekenntnis*, 1950, p. 150.
- St. Louis, Mo.

Outlines on Synodical Conference Gospels

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY

LUKE 10:38-42

Introduction: Sir Walter Scott once said: "If all the books in the world ever held a convention and the Bible suddenly stepped into that great hall, all other books would bow in deepest reverence." God's Word, hearing, studying, digesting it, should have the priority in our lives. Means of grace wherein God reveals Himself to us through Jesus Christ.

FIRST THINGS FIRST (OR: DIVINE PRIORITY)

I

The Need of Putting God's Word First

A. St. Augustine: "Our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee." Martha, a demonstration of this. She put other things first. Result: She was "careful" (anxious), and "troubled." Latter means: "tossed about." Her anxiety and troubled mind showed need of the peace which Jesus alone can supply.

Symptomatic of our age. We are a restless people, tossed about with anxieties, worries, drives. When Maxim Gorky visited America some years ago, he was taken to Coney Island. Looking around at all the means of entertainment, he said: "What a sad people you Americans must be!" What he meant was "jittery." We become overwrought with the circumstances of life, get restless; then as an escape, we develop a mania for diversion. Elaborate. Apart from God we are left at the mercy of our guilt, worries, fears. What a sad price we pay!

B. The verdict of Jesus Himself. "*One thing* is needful," v. 42. Rebukes Martha, who on account of her work neglected the Gospel, v. 40. Apply to our own day. John 15:5b. Jesus, the Searcher of hearts, *knows*.

II

The Answer: Hearing, Studying God's Word

Mary a demonstration of this, v. 39. "Sat at Jesus feet." Not at the feet of the god of mammon. "The only music many Americans

can appreciate is the sound of clinking dollars, and the only art they can understand is the picture of American paper money." Not at the feet of the gods of science, pleasure. Emphasize: "Sat at *Jesus'* feet," of her Savior and Lord. "Heard His Word," v. 39. She made Jesus' seat a pulpit, her own place a pew, the room a chapel where our Savior approached her sinful heart with His Gospel of grace. She "heard," listened, drank it in, became so absorbed in the words of eternal life that she forgot all else. Distinguish between *hearing* and mere receptivity where the Word "goes in at one ear and out of the other." First things first.

- a. Church . . . regular hearing, Luke 11:28. As our Lord chided Martha v. 41, so He is displeased with us when we let secondary things interfere. Elaborate.
- b. Home. . . . The picture of Jesus in this home should be the scene in our own home . . . family gathered about Jesus. Luke 19:5.
- c. Personal lives.

III

The BENEFITS

Jesus Himself called His Word the "good part," v. 42. What are its benefits?

A. Brings us to the knowledge of our sin. Jesus directs our thoughts inward so that we see what is going on within our hearts. Matt. 15:19.

B. Brings us to the knowledge of our Savior. John 3:16; 15:3.

C. Gives us strength for quiet, joyful Christian living. The Gospel, conveying the merits of Jesus and His Cross to us, is a power. Rom. 1:16 (*dynamis*), literally, "dynamite." Sir Wm. Osler, famous scientist, man of poise and power, traced his victorious life to this lifelong habit: "I begin each day with Christ. At night as I lay off my clothes I undress my soul too and lay aside its sins. In the presence of God I lie down to rest and to awaken a free man with a new life."

Omaha, Nebr.

A. C. BURROUGHS

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY

MATT. 16:13-20

A successful advertising man (Bruce Barton) was fed up with the descriptions and pictures of Christ which he had heard and seen in Sunday schools and churches from his childhood on. He felt that they did not do Christ justice, that they pictured Him as a weakling who could not inspire people. The real Jesus, he was convinced, had been a strong, manly, inspiring leader. So he wrote a book about Jesus entitled "The Man Nobody Knows."

In this book he says some striking things about Jesus, things which may help us get a clearer view of how Christ, as a human being, must have struck those with whom He came into contact. But the real question he has left unanswered: "Who, what is Jesus?" And no wonder! Flesh and blood cannot reveal the mystery of Jesus' person, but only the Father in heaven. And the Father in heaven did reveal Him over nineteen hundred years ago to His disciples as the Christ, the Son of the living God. As such we for our own persons must learn to know Him.

Theme:

KNOW JESUS OF NAZARETH AS THE CHRIST,
THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD!

I

This Is How God Himself Revealed and Still Reveals Him

More than half of Jesus' public ministry was over. During this time He had taught His disciples. He had not instructed them much directly concerning His person. But they had heard His preaching, John 4:32ff.; Matthew 5—7; Luke 4:18ff.; Matt. 9:1ff.; 10:5-42; chaps. 11, 12, 13. They had seen His miracles: John 2:1-11; 2:23; Luke 4:33-41; 5:1-10, and many others.

Jesus wants to know what the disciples have learned concerning His person, but asks what others say about Him. V. 13.

V. 14. The crowds realized that Jesus was an extraordinary person of prophetic stature.

V. 15. "But whom say ye that I am?"

V. 16. A better answer than that given by "men." Peter, in the name of all: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The

Christ, the long-awaited Messiah of prophecy. Gen. 3:15; Gen. 12:3; Gen. 49:10; Is. 11:1; Is. 53, and many others.

But not a mere human Messiah, but the Son of the living God: Ps. 2:7; 110:1; Is. 7:14; Luke 1:31, 32, 35; John 3:16, 17; 1:14, and many others.

V. 17. This knowledge had been revealed to Peter by the heavenly Father, not through direct, immediate revelation, but through pondering Jesus' word and contemplating His miracles.

II

This Truth Is the Rock on Which Christ's Church is Built (V. 18)

Roman Catholics and some Protestants would make St. Peter himself, his person, the rock on which the Church is built. How foolish! Mark 14:29, 30; Gal. 2:11-13.

The rock on which the Church is built is the truth that Jesus is the promised Messiah, the Son of the living God, Eph. 2:20-22. The Apostles and Prophets are the foundation of the Church, not as persons, but by virtue of their teaching, which is none other than the truth here confessed by Peter.

Let us know and confess Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. Then we also shall be built upon the rock, as members of the Church of Christ, against which all the forces of hell shall not prevail.

III

Knowledge of This Truth Gives Men the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven (V. 19)

On the basis of this passage Roman Catholicism claims the keys for St. Peter and for his purported successors, the Roman pontiffs. The keys are interpreted as the power to legislate for the Church and to abrogate legislation. So they interpret the words about binding and loosing. A few Protestants follow them in this interpretation.

But Matt. 18:15-20 Jesus gives the power of loosing and binding to all the Apostles, yes (see v. 17), to the Church itself. And John 20:22, 23 He Himself defines this power as the power to remit and to retain sins.

Wondrous power given unto men, for blessing, for healing, for

salvation! This power is given to all who with St. Peter learn to confess Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ, the Son of the living God.

So let us learn to know Him by diligent study of God's Word. So let us be built upon the rock of the truth as living stones in His Church. So let us exercise the Office of the Keys for the salvation of our fellow men. *Amen.*

Springfield, Ill.

FRED KRAMER

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY

MATT. 16:21-28

Quinquagesima is the last of the three pre-Lenten Sundays. This day is in harmony with the Lenten days before us. During Lent we give the Passion of our Lord a prominent place in our increased preaching schedule. Here at the gateway to the Passion we must be very sure where our true values lie if we are to journey with our Lord throughout Lent.

Our text follows the great confession of Peter: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The Introit cries out, "Be Thou my strong Rock, for a house of defense to save me." Be Thou my *Salvation!* We all need a Cross-centered Lent. This Gospel text gives us

JESUS' PLAN FOR A PROFITABLE LENT

I

Jesus Says: Let a Man Deny Himself (V. 24)

A. This self-denial is not just to give up some fault or to set aside some special desire or habit, e. g., eating meat, smoking, entertainment.

B. True self-denial must say: "I know not that man — myself. I know only that other man — Christ." We must surrender our own pride and self-esteem and confess: "I am a sinner." Gal. 5: 19-21; Eph. 5:3-7; Titus 2:12.

II

Jesus Says: Let a Man Take Up His Cross (V. 24)

A. Peter did not understand the Cross. Peter at first saw no necessity for the Cross even for Jesus, v. 22. He saw the Cross as an impending tragedy. He *began* to rebuke Jesus.

B. Jesus resisted the Satanic temptation of Peter and reminded Peter that the way of the Cross was God's way, v. 23. V. 21: Jesus *must* go unto Jerusalem. Jesus *must* suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes. Jesus *must* be killed. Jesus *must* be raised again on the third day. Ps. 22; Is. 53.

C. God's way of the Cross must be our way, v. 24. Not as Peter misunderstood, but as Jesus explained. "In those days the extreme suffering which a man might expect from the hostile power of Rome was the literal cross; in ours it is suffering not less acute, really, though perhaps not literally a cross." Matt. 10:38; Mark 10:21; John 8:31, 32; Eph. 5:2; 1 Cor. 2:2; 2 Cor. 11:23 ff. St. Paul's sufferings; Christians behind the Iron Curtain. Ridicule and slander at our work.

III

Jesus Says: Follow Me (V. 24)

- A. We dare not try to save our life. V. 25.
 1. Saving an earthly life centers our hope in this world. V. 26. 1 John 2:15.
 2. Saving an earthly life for ourselves means we will lose the heavenly. 2 Tim. 2:12 b.
- B. We profit by losing our life for Christ's sake. V. 25.
 1. Losing our earthly life centers our hope in Christ.
 2. Losing our earthly life means we will find the heavenly one. Rom. 13:13; Eph. 4:1; Col. 1:10; 2:6; 2 Tim. 2:12a; 1 John 2:6.
 3. Losing our lives for Christ's sake gives us the blessing of His favor. V. 27. When He comes as the Lord of life and death, He takes us who have denied ourselves, taken the cross, and followed Him, *by His grace* into eternal life. Matt. 10:32, 33.

Introit: "For Thy name's sake lead me and guide me."

Suggested Hymns: 394, 408, 400, 422, 409.

St. Louis, Mo.

WILLIAM E. GOERSS

INVOCAVIT SUNDAY

JOHN 15:9-17

The unique feature in this pericope, setting it apart from similar sections in the Johannine writings, is the saying on friendship. (Cf. 13:34f.; 1 John 2:7ff.; 3:11, 23; 4:10, 18f.) The text itself yields the theme: YE ARE MY FRIENDS. The theme could be stated topically: FRIENDSHIP WITH JESUS. The introduction might call attention to the universal hunger for friendship in an increasingly unfriendly world. God's answer is the community of friendship created by the Lenten Gospel.

I

Friendship with Jesus Is a Gift

The Society of Jesus founded some 400 years ago. By prescribed spiritual exercises Ignatius Loyola proposed to lift his followers into fellowship with Jesus. Many successors. The man today who says: "Jesus is my Ideal. I keep the golden rule. . . ." A little of this man in each of us. Therefore, necessary to note, first of all, that *friendship with Jesus is a gift*. We do not found a society of Jesus. "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you," v. 16. Call of the Twelve an example (John 1:35-51; 6:70). Has it been any different with us? Illustrate.

II

The Gift of Friendship Means Freedom

Does Jesus, then, force Himself upon friends of His choice? No. *When He makes them His friends, He bestows upon them a wonderful freedom.* V. 15.

A. Slaves we were. A slave takes orders but does not know mind of master. Master plan a mystery. Example of construction worker to whom blueprint is a mystery. Picture of slavery under Law. Man receives commands but remains separated from God who gives them. (Gal. 3.) Law when broken, enslaves further to fear. (Rom. 8:15; Heb. 2:15.)

B. Now He calls us friends. Real friends those with whom we feel completely free. Jesus such a Friend. Free and open with us. (See Gen. 18:17 and Ex. 33:11 for interesting O.T. parallels.) "All things . . . I have made known," v. 15. Revelation of God's love in Christ frees from old bondage. (Gal. 3; Rom. 8:3f.) We

are now free to approach God. "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He may give it you," v. 16. (Cf. Heb. 4:13-16.)

III

But the Freedom of Friendship Implies Obedience

A. Freedom destroys itself if not guarded by sense of responsibility. Example of basic American freedoms and illustrations of abuse from daily press. Principle holds good in spiritual sphere. First Corinthians rich in illustrative materials of freedom running wild (e. g., 6:12ff.; 8:9).

B. The freedom of friendship is guarded by the call to obedience. "Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I have commanded you," v. 14. (Cf. 1 Pet. 2:16, 17.) "If" clause does not set up condition for friendship. (See Part I.) Rather, Jesus is describing His friends. "My friends are obedient — free to obey Me in love."

IV

The Obedience of Friendship Is Love

A. Love is the motive for obedience. Vv. 9, 10. Note that love here spoken of is Jesus' love, not ours. Note also that the motive power of Jesus' love pushes and pulls, impels and attracts. His love for us the push; our determination to abide in His love the pull.

B. Love is the expression of obedience. "This is My commandment that ye love one another," v. 12. (Parallels listed in introduction; see also Rom. 13:10.) Does not ask that we love Him. Need He? By our love for one another He will know that we are His friends. *

V

The Love of Friendship Demands Sacrifice

A. The example of Jesus. Vv. 12, 13. Jesus not stating a general truth. (Mother. Soldier.) Recall time of speaking. Clearly means Himself. "Such love is required of you." Natural love selfish, a quest for richer and deeper life. This love marked by sacrifice, a loss of life. (Cf. ch. 10:11-18.)

B. The response of Jesus' friends. We are friends for whom Jesus died. ** We are now in the real society of Jesus. Our love, rooted in Him, is an extension of His love. Has the same object, the

world of sinners. We must love even those whom every natural impulse tells us we cannot even like. Consider the good Samaritan, who sacrificed a bit of himself for his natural enemy and counted it all joy (Luke 10:33-35). Applications to contemporary life will readily suggest themselves.

VI

The Sacrifice of Friendship Portends Joy

A. V. 11. There is the joy of self-sacrifice. Nonsense! Yet Jesus experienced this joy in life of obedient self-sacrifice. V. 10. Those who dare to be like Him experience it as they dedicate obedient lives to Him in service of others.

B. There is the joy of achievement. Jesus experienced this when the sacrifice was completed. (Heb. 12:2.) We experience it when our little sacrifices bear fruit that remains and when our prayers are heard. (V. 16; cf. 16:24.) We shall share it fully when we enter the joy of our Lord in the reunion of all His friends. (Matt. 25: 21, 23.)

The following alternative outline covers much the same ground in the more familiar two-part framework:

YE ARE MY FRIENDS

I. *Through an Act of Love*

- A. Jesus' love has chosen us
- B. His choice rests upon His sacrifice
- C. His sacrifice sets us free

II. *For Acts of Love*

- A. Our love is the goal of His choice
- B. Our love is an extension of His sacrifice
- C. Our love sets a limit to our freedom

NOTES

* If we really abide in His love, if His love is, as it were, the element in which we live, then that love of His must seek expression through us. His command to love is thus not a new law to which we are enslaved, unless by law we understand the very law of our being in Him.

** St. Paul says: "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us," Rom. 5:8. That does not contradict what is said here about Jesus' death for His friends. For Jesus is the Friend of sinners, and it is just by His death that He won for sinners the right to be the friends of God.

Burlington, Colo.

WALTER BARTLING

Life Through Death*

DEAR MOTHER IN CHRIST AND OTHER MEMBERS
OF THE BEREAVED FAMILY, AND FRIENDS:

We cannot neatly divide the people here today into "mourners" and "congregation." All of us feel in our hearts the sense of a great loss. We mourn the death of a man who was at once great and warm. Thus it is that most of us are tempted to wish that we did not have to go through the ordeal of this service. For anything that we think or say about Dr. Louis J. Sieck seems simply to deepen this sense of loss.

He was an able and far-seeing administrator of our school. We told him that his tasks were not done and that we were praying hard that he might be restored to us. He was a great leader of his Church, and his grasp of world-wide Lutheranism and Christianity, his friendly reach into many groups, will be so hard to replace. Though he himself was humble about his theology, it will doubtless appear more clearly through the years that he had that clear understanding of God's love in Christ coupled with a courage to stress it which is just what we all needed. He was a devoted husband and father, and how can his place be filled? He was a jovial yet sensitive friend, and his passing leaves so many of us very lonely. Would it not be better if we could simply say our thanks in our heart that God has taken him and ended his sufferings and labors?

In answer to this thought let us together realize that we are here not just out of respect and sympathy, but that God has something to say to us in his illness and death. This is so important, because God's message to us is a message of life. True, every believer's death brings him to a life with Christ that is far better, and in that sense his own better life follows upon his own dying. But there is something more here. St. Paul reflects upon this fact repeatedly, particularly in the fourth chapter of 2 Corinthians. *The sickness, pain, and death of a Christian preacher is a preaching of life to those who remain.* Listen to these words:

For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So, then, death worketh in us, but life in you. (2 Cor. 4:11, 12.)

The writer to the Hebrews would say of him that "he, being dead, yet speaketh" (Heb. 11:4). There we have a purpose for this hour which

* Sermon delivered at funeral of President Louis J. Sieck, October 17, 1952, by Prof. R. R. Caemmerer.

our dear father and brother would most heartily approve of, and there we have an answer to our own sense of loss.

I

To understand the remarkable significance of this death, let us first remind ourselves what suffering and dying means to the sufferer himself. God has great plans when He sends weakness to a man and confronts him with death. True, God gives us our bodies and good things to eat and to drink. But always He wants us to remember that we mean something to Him and possess the life of His own Spirit only when as little children, as beggars, we throw ourselves upon His mercy. For we are sinners who have gone our own way again and again. We need His forgiveness, and He has it for us, for Jesus Christ, His Son, suffered and died for us on the Cross. Hence God's great goal for us all is that we cling to that gift of His pardon and His Spirit, that we never let it go. So it is that God sends the maladies of the body, the perplexities of life, the threat of death itself, so that we might put everything that men call strength and power in its proper place and simply count on Him. So St. Paul was led to claim, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Cor. 12:9).

Our departed brother was highly endowed with health and a good mind and a winning personality and robust qualities of leadership. Yet our Lord plied him with the little and great infirmities of life. He was not given to complaint, yet God had His reminders in and around him throughout all his life, and particularly as his stature as pastor and president grew, that he was nothing without the grace of God. It was a sort of pious jest with him that when men thought he might withdraw from the tensions of a large pastorate and a metropolitan leadership into the calm of a seminary, suddenly a throng of difficulties beset him—perplexities, persecutions, illness. But this is the point, it was as though he was saying with St. Paul:

We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed (2 Cor. 4:8, 9).

We used to talk about his front—good grooming, erect posture, the ability to shrug off tremendous irritations, the enjoyment of the good things of life as they came. But then we discovered that it wasn't a front, for right in the midst of trial he actually was enjoying the sense of God standing by. The more stress his body had to take—and it was a steady medical problem for many years—the more serene and joyous his experience of the grace of God to him in Jesus Christ.

II

But here we sit, and what does this all say to us? That's just the point, he was talking to us! First and last — literally first and last — Louis J. Sieck was a preacher, a minister of the Gospel, the speaker of a message to people, the message of the grace of God to sinners through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Forty-eight years he was at that business, always talking it, during the last ten years talking it to men who would talk it on. He talked it in big and glowing words of personal address so that people said, "He is really a good preacher." He talked it always and always with the clear essential in the middle of it, that Jesus Christ is Son of God and Redeemer of the world and we have life and forgiveness through Him. Oh, how he glowed with the joy of telling that story! But here is the astounding fact that St. Paul is trying to rub into our minds about his own ministry and certainly about our dear departed father and brother: the very pain and weakness of his body, its death, preached that same message!

We always bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that that life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

And our text repeats it:

For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. (2 Cor. 4:11).

Do you get that word "manifest"? To be a man who publishes for God, who plays on the screen of his life the great drama of God's forgiveness and outpouring of life, that is the business of the Christian preacher. And that publishing, Paul would say, works best when we think of the story and not just of the screen!

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us (2 Cor. 4:7).

It didn't take very long for any of us to discover that this man was holding to a Savior and leaning on the grace of God, not by claiming that he was strong and influential and competent, but by realizing that he was tried and troubled and perplexed — and God had strength for him. But that strength he wanted to share! He wanted to share it with his people, little or great, in his ministry. He had a way of trying to embrace his whole audience, visible and unseen, in his chapel talks and have them sense the pressure of this truth, "When I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. 12:10), "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus" (Gal. 6:17).

This was such a powerful ministry of preaching because it was from

Christ and for Christ. The work that was rubbing his veins to pieces was the work of his Lord, he was a partaker of His sufferings and being delivered into death for Jesus' sake. He knew it, and certainly would have it no other way, and made it very clear that it was the business of Jesus and His Word that he was about.

We thought he had more work to do. We were right; he did. His work goes on, and he is still doing it. "So then death worketh in us, but life in you." That God should take him is God's way of saying that this crumbling body is not at all the measure of life, it is an earthen vessel and returns to the dust; but the treasure is the life of God, it goes on, and a better body is to clothe it, and that is a life which we have, too, and which we are to use. What counts is not just the beauty or the manliness or the strength or the riches or the prestige or the success of the body; what counts is that in Christ we have life. He is the Resurrection and the Life, a life that we can have and use, beginning now and ending never.

That life is the very thing we need for continuing the work of this institution. That life is what we need to be a blessing to others even as he was a blessing to us. That life is what you need, who go on in his household and family. That life is working in you through the very show of faith which he has given you right down to these last moments. Don't you remember his own Psalm with which he worshiped with you last Monday:

For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me; He shall set me up upon a rock. And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me; therefore will I offer in His tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord. (Ps. 27:5, 6.)

Draw on Christ and His redeeming work for life day by day. There is no other source for it. There would not be if He were still with us. There is no other life, and that is what He would say if He were with us, and that is what God is saying to us through His death. Death has worked in Him, but life is at work in us.

THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

THE NEW DOCTRINE OF THE BIBLE

Under this heading the *Australian Theological Review* (Vol. XXIII, Nos. 1, 2) quotes a bewildered writer who is troubled by a "new doctrine of the Bible," which he believes to be "no less destructive to the Christian faith based on the Bible than is rationalism or modernism." From the *Bible League Quarterly*, in which the article appeared, the *Review* quotes copiously in explanation of the new heresy. We read, in part:

"The Bible is not in any absolute sense the Word of God. Christ is the Word, but inasmuch as the Bible is the most original and authentic source of knowledge of Christ, it is called the Word of God in the sense that the Shakespeare play is called *Hamlet*, because Hamlet is the central figure." — "The new doctrine will make concessions to the older belief. It will teach that the Bible is the Word of God, not merely in part, but as a whole. It will do this, the writer says, as strongly as any 'Fundamentalist' could wish. Thus when the new doctrine is complete, it will show that the Bible is 'the Word made flesh and dwelling among us, taking the form of a servant and being found in fashion as a man.' There is obviously much in this statement that is obscure, and that calls for fuller explanation. What, for example, is intended to be conveyed by comparing the divine and human aspects of the Scripture to the divine and human natures of our Lord? It cannot mean that the human side of Scripture is like Christ's humanity, faultlessly perfect, for the Bible's human side has always been declared to be hopelessly defective. If, on the other hand, it is intended to imply that the humanity of Christ was marked by as many defects as the Bible is supposed to exhibit, it is a suggestion to which Evangelicals could not for one moment assent."

In concluding the article, the writer says: "If we have interpreted it [the new doctrine] with any degree of accuracy, we cannot but regard it with the utmost distrust. It appears to us to be as subtle as it is dangerous. It will repudiate rationalism, but it will retain many of its conclusions. It will employ evangelical phraseology while rejecting essential belief. It will hold out a friendly hand to tenets that are to the plain man mutually exclusive. It will pour its deceptive oil on the troubled theological waters and offer a calm passage to disturbed and anxious souls; yet it may end in the shipwreck of their faith."

Describing the "new doctrine" as a form of Barthianism, the editor of the *Review* writes: "We must expect to meet old foes with new faces; but we shall be safe in an impregnable citadel if in our faith and our teaching we hold to the Holy Scriptures as the very Word of God, given to men by His inspiration, and hence our infallible teacher and guide. To all who in reality are attempting to take this Word from us while assuring us of their desire to make it more truly ours, by breaking with tradition and demonstrating to us its long misunderstood character, we oppose the steadfast reply: It is written!"

J. T. MUELLER

FELLOWSHIP RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE ALC

Among a number of significant resolutions adopted by the American Lutheran Church at its biennial convention held in Waverly, Iowa, in October, those on Christian fellowship are of special relevance. We submit them in their entirety (see *Lutheran Herald*, November 4).

"Whereas the Committee on Fellowship has recommended the following actions to be taken by the Church at this convention, after due consideration we concur in them and urge their adoption:

"(1) *Whereas* the American Lutheran Church has always affirmed its interest in and support of all efforts toward total Lutheran unity, we again reaffirm our conviction that it is necessary and salutary for any and all Lutheran bodies contemplating merger to engage in discussions relating to doctrine and practice as the first step toward closer organizational affiliation.

"(2) *Whereas* the National Lutheran Council has our wholehearted support in its various phases and activities of work, be it

"Resolved that the American Lutheran Church increase its interest and support to the end that the National Lutheran Council may be made an even stronger agency for the participating church bodies without in any way infringing upon the autonomy of any church body or usurping its authority.

"(3) *Whereas* the recommendations of the Joint Union Committee meet with our hearty approval, we commend the Committee of 45 for its faithful work in carrying out the directives of the participating church bodies and recommend adoption of the suggested resolutions:

"(a) With the ultimate union in view of those church bodies which shall hereafter agree to the eventual articles of union, and as a necessary step to such articles of union, the American Lutheran Church hereby receives for consideration and action the statements supplementary to the declaration as to doctrine and practice basic in the American

Lutheran Conference, as prepared and submitted by the Joint Union Committee.

"(b) The American Lutheran Church in convention assembled, having received and considered the statements regarding doctrine and practice as submitted by the Joint Union Committee of 1952, hereby declares its agreement with and approval of them.

"(c) The American Lutheran Church in convention assembled, in consideration of similar actions by other members of the American Lutheran Conference, hereby authorizes the election of nine members of a Joint Union Committee. The American Lutheran Church hereby instructs and empowers its Committee in co-operation with the other committees to guide the further progress of studies initiated in 1950, to proceed with studies of polity and organizational structure, with preparation of prospective Articles of Union and with tentative drafts for constitutions to be submitted to the respective church bodies for consideration and action.

"(4) *Whereas* there are many matters which should be discussed in the Joint Union Committee before definite action can be taken by the participating bodies acting singly or jointly, be it

"Resolved that our Committee on Fellowship together with the Executive Committee of the Church in consultation with the College of District Presidents be empowered to act in behalf of the Church in matters relating to the proposed merger, subject to the approval of the Church at its next convention.

"For their guidance, we draw attention to the resolution of the 1950 convention: 'We empower our representatives on the Joint Union Committee (Evangelical Lutheran Church and United Evangelical Lutheran Church) in making it possible for the other two bodies of the American Lutheran Conference to participate in negotiations toward organic union, with the understanding that their participation or non-participation shall not interfere with the present negotiations looking toward organic union.'

"(5) *Whereas* the second part of the Common Confession is nearing completion, we gratefully submit the report of our committee on the progress in this area of understanding with the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and look forward to the early completion of the Common Confession and its submission to our Church.

"(6) *Whereas* the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has asked that the District Presidents, the President, and the Vice-presidents of our two Churches meet with the Committee on Doctrinal Unity of the

Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and the Committee on Fellowship of the American Lutheran Church to discuss practices in the congregational life of both Churches, be it

"Resolved to authorize the President, the Executive Committee, and the District Presidents together with our Committee on Fellowship to have such a meeting with the corresponding officials of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod for the purpose stated.

"(7) Whereas a friendly meeting of our Committee on Fellowship with the Special Commission on Relations to American Lutheran Church Bodies of The United Lutheran Church in America has been held in order to discuss matters of common interest, to seek better understandings, and to increase co-operation between our church bodies, we heartily approve the plan of our Committee and the Special Commission to hold another meeting in the near future.

"(8) Whereas our membership and participation in the Lutheran World Federation has brought great blessings to our Church, we thank God for this larger fellowship of fellow Lutherans throughout the world and pledge our co-operation in the projects undertaken by this federation.

"(9) Whereas our membership and participation in the World Council of Churches also provides opportunities and blessings for our Church, we note with satisfaction the progress that has been made by this association of churches in the few years of its existence and activity.

"(10) Whereas the resolutions of our Church on Selective Fellowship are in need of clarification and revision, be it

"Resolved that the Church authorize the Committee on Fellowship to bring in the necessary revisions and interpretations for consideration by our Church at its next convention."

Commenting on the above resolutions, the editor of the *Lutheran Herald* (November 4) observes:

"The entire ten [resolutions] (plus one naming the members of the Joint Union Committee) were passed in less than an hour, with almost no discussion. It was explained that the lack of discussion was due to the fact that the responsible floor committee had spent five days in study and hearings. It was evidently the feeling of the delegates that the resolutions as presented to the convention represented exactly what the Church wants. Then why use valuable time to discuss them further? . . .

"The chief interest very evidently centered in the projected merger

within the American Lutheran Conference. There was not a voice raised, not a syllable uttered, which gave the observer the right to believe other than that the American Lutheran Church holds the same views now that it held when the tri-partite merger was first discussed. . . . The entire tenor of the meeting suggests that the American Lutheran Church is chiefly interested in the merger with which we [Ev. Lutheran Church] have been dealing for several years. Probably her stand will prove to be much like ours, namely, that Augustana's new proposal for an all-inclusive merger has no connection whatsoever with the present negotiations."

P. M. B.

DEDICATION OF NEW HOME OF CONCORDIA HISTORICAL INSTITUTE

Sunday, November 16, was a significant day in the history of Concordia Historical Institute. On that day its new museum and archives building—the first Lutheran building of this type in the country—was dedicated. Dr. Arthur C. Repp, president of the Institute, performed the dedicatory rites, Rev. Richard A. Jesse of Milwaukee preached the sermon, Rev. August R. Suelflow, curator of the Institute, was liturgist, and Dr. J. W. Behnken spoke on behalf of our Synod. Professor Walter E. Buszin was organist for the occasion, and the Girls' Glee Club of the Lutheran High School in St. Louis, directed by William Kirchhoff, sang two choral selections.

Construction of the new building was made possible largely by a substantial legacy left by the late Mr. Louis H. Waltke, first president of the Institute, to whose memory the Museum Room is dedicated. A plaque in memory of Mr. Waltke is affixed to the wall of this room.

The Institute is located on the campus of Concordia Seminary near the south exit. It is constructed of red brick and is divided into the Waltke Museum Room; administrative offices for the curator and secretary; the research room, where anyone interested in doing research on a given phase of Lutheranism in America can work quietly and undisturbed (this room is dedicated to the memory of Dr. W. G. Polack, who was for many years the guiding spirit of the Institute); the workroom in which all materials received are sorted, classified, and catalogued; and the stack room and vault, which house the books, pamphlets, documents, and museum pieces.

Organized in 1927 by a group of 14 charter members, the Institute has as its chief purpose to cultivate a more general interest in the history of the Lutheran Church of America, especially of the Missouri

Synod; to stimulate historical research and to publish its results; and to collect and preserve articles of historical value.

One of the major contributions of the Institute is the publication of its official organ, the *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly*, edited at present by Dr. Repp. Its many volumes are an indispensable source book on the history of our Synod.

The first full-time curator of the Institute was Dr. Karl Kretzmann. He served the Institute from 1943 to 1948. His successor is Rev. August R. Suelflow.

P. M. B.

CONCLUDING POSTSCRIPTS

The Board of Control of the Lutheran Seminary in Thiensville, Wis., recently filled the vacancies which resulted from the death of Professor Adalbert Schaller, who was killed in an automobile accident in the early part of this year, and from the retirement, because of advancing age, of Professor M. Lehninger. The two new professors are Rev. F. E. Blume and Rev. G. Hoenecke. Both men were installed in September in St. John's Lutheran Church, Milwaukee. May God's blessings rest on their labors. May God also keep in His love and grace Professor Lehninger.

. . .

According to the *Lutheran Standard* (November 8) the American Lutheran Church is making progress in its program of Christian parish education. At its convention in Waverly the delegates approved the calling of an additional man for the Parish Education staff. This new staff member is to encourage and assist in starting more Bible classes for young people and adults and in developing parents' classes. The convention also approved the action of its Board of Parish Education in assuming responsibility for enlisting, training, and placing Christian day school teachers, and seeking to advance the work of their Christian day schools. Two new schools were organized in the past year, and the total number of day school pupils was increased by 269. Our congratulations!

. . .

The exalted Christ will return in glory to judge both the quick and the dead. But there are people who have strange notions about that return. In a pamphlet apparently broadcast throughout the country and titled "Christ's Promise to Return" appears the following incredible perversion of Scriptural truth: "Now the two thousand year cycle which the Christ instituted is drawing to a close, and we are passing out of the Piscean age into a new era under the zodiacal sign of Aquarius. This is an astronomical fact which can be verified by

anyone with a knowledge of astronomy (!). And just as Christ brought the revelation of love as the keynote of the Piscean age—symbolized, so the writer says, by Jesus when He said to Peter and Andrew, "I will make you fishers of men"—so the sounding of the note of the Aquarian age—that of universality—requires a new teaching to make this aspect understandable and form the core of the development needed for humanity's progress. That Christ knew He would return at the end of the Piscean age and inaugurate the new Aquarian era was indicated by Him before the Last Supper (!). His instructions to His disciples to follow the man with the pitcher of water and at the place where he went in to make ready the feast, is a symbolic reference to the point in time when the age of Aquarius (the Water Carrier) will be entered, and He will fulfill in the great age of sharing and universal brotherhood, the symbolic enactment of the Last Supper." The Bible has often enough been reduced to a book of symbolism. But it was left to our generation to discover in it the Piscean and the Aquarian age. If we may venture a guess, the next age will be the Asinine age—perhaps it is here even now—symbolized in Scripture by the story which tells of Christ riding on an ass.

P. M. B.

BRIEF ITEMS FROM "RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE"

Soviet Zone authorities have ordered the East German Post Office in Berlin to discontinue immediately the delivery of Western-licensed religious publications and to strike these papers from the so-called postal mailing list. This list contains the names of all publications which the East German Post Office is allowed to handle. The action is tantamount to an official ban of the periodicals in the Soviet Zone. . . . Among the publications affected is the Evangelical Lutheran Church Paper (*Evangelisch Lutherische Kirchenzeitung*), organ of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELK).

* * *

Delegates at the convention of the United Lutheran Church in America, by a vote of 343 to 198, recommended that the Revised Standard Version of the Bible be used in the lessons for the intersynodical Lutheran service book and hymnal now nearing completion and scheduled for publication in 1955. Present plans, it was stated, call for the King James Version of the Bible in preparing the lessons. This action of the convention, however, has no mandatory effect on the commission preparing the new book. . . . The Augustana Lutheran Church also is on record as urging the substitution of the Revised Standard Version in the lessons.

* * *

At the 18th biennial convention of the United Lutheran Church in America, held in Seattle, Wash., it was reported that the Church now has more than 2,000,000 members. They contributed \$8,592,023 in the year ending June 30. . . . Dr. Franklin Clark Fry of New York was elected to his fifth consecutive two-year term as president; also re-elected were Dr. F. Eppling Reinartz, secretary; the Rev. Edmund F. Wagner, treasurer; Dr. G. E. Ruff, editor of the *Lutheran*.

* * *

The general council of the Seventh-day Adventists has sounded a warning against "religion by legislation." The delegates pledged a battle against the extension of Sunday "blue laws" which are reported being sponsored in 14 State Legislatures. Since they observe their Sabbath on Saturday, the Seventh-day Adventists are opposed to laws setting aside Sunday as the day of worship, contending that this interferes with religious freedom and is contrary to the principle of separation of Church and State.

* * *

To ensure the navy a continuing supply of chaplains, probationary appointments as ensigns in the Naval Reserve are being offered to theological students of all faiths who are in attendance this fall at accredited seminaries. The program at the same time offers these students the opportunity to complete their theological training while members of the Naval Reserve. If they discontinue their theological studies, withdraw from school, or fail academically, they will be allowed to resign and receive honorable discharges. The same will be true if, when their theological training is completed, there is no vacancy for them in the Chaplains Corps. If an appointment is available, however, they will enter the service with the rank of lieutenant, junior grade.

* * *

Plans for setting up a Lutheran theological research center for Southeast Asia in Madras, India, will be given priority by the Lutheran World Federation's Department of Theology when it is activated next May. This report was brought to Madras by the Rev. D. R. Devaprasad, professor at the newly opened United Lutheran Theological College in Madras, who had represented the Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church at the World Federation's Assembly in Hannover, Germany, in August. Purpose of the proposed center, he said, would be to "foster original research in relation to the religious backgrounds of the East. . . . There is a new interest among church leaders in the study of Christianity in the East. Formerly Christianity was associated, in the

East, with the rulers, and as a result it was confused with foreign imperialism and foreign culture. Today, however, there is a realization that Christianity stands on its own as a world religion. In some circles it is even believed that Christianity should 'reinvade the West' through Indian Christians." * * *

Director J. Edgar Hoover of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, in a message prepared for National Catholic Youth Week, October 19-26, pointed out that one million crimes were committed in the first six months of 1952 alone, an increase of 6.4 per cent over the number in the same period a year ago; and, he stressed, "youth led the criminal army. Almost 30 per cent of all persons arrested were less than 25 years of age, and they were responsible for 55 per cent of all robberies, 60 per cent of all burglaries, 69 per cent of all auto thefts, and 43 per cent of all larcenies. Behind these figures lie tragic stories of parental neglect, broken homes, immorality, adult delinquency, and public apathy — painful proof that our nation is suffering from spiritual starvation." * * *

The Catholic Press Association, the Rev. Thomas A. Meehan of New York, president, announced that there are some 17,251,449 subscribers to 549 Catholic newspapers and magazines in the United States and Canada. The total for 145 Catholic weekly newspapers is 3,733,826; for the 404 magazines, 13,517,623. * * *

Adventists attending the celebration of the founding of the first Seventh-Day Adventist International Sabbath School in Rochester, N. Y., 100 years ago, were told that there are now 17,373 such Sabbath schools in 194 countries, with an enrollment of 1,300,000 pupils. * * *

Women's missionary societies of the ULCA have contributed \$850,000 for the church's work last year. Most of this amount was designated for home and foreign missions. . . . These societies now number 102,000 members in 3,546 local groups. * * *

The Most Rev. Maximilian de Fuerstenberg, Papal Internuncio to Japan, released official figures showing that the Roman Catholic population of Japan has increased by 57 per cent in the last five years. The total on June 30, 1952, stood at 171,785. Catholic priests now number 973, of whom 760 are foreigners. THEO. HOYER

BOOK REVIEW

All books reviewed in this periodical may be procured from or through Concordia Publishing House, 3558 South Jefferson Avenue, St. Louis 18, Missouri.

TYPES OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE. By Joachim Wach. The University of Chicago Press, 1951. 275 pages, 5½×8½. \$3.50.

In this collection of ten essays the author offers criteria for distinguishing religious from other types of experience. He discusses the place of the history of religions in the study of theology, universals in religion, and the concept of the "classical" in the study of religions. In his discussion of the history of non-Christian religions he has selected the idea of man in the Near Eastern religions, the spiritual teachings in Islam, and the study of Mahayana Buddhism. For corresponding types of religious experience in the Christian religion he has chosen those of Caspar Schwenckfeld, Alexis de Tocqueville, and Rudolf Otto. Dr. Wach is a recognized authority in his field and here offers the reader an impressive mass of informative material; he could, however, render the non-Christian a most important service by including a chapter in which he would show the fundamental difference between Christianity and all other religions. There are in reality only two fundamentally different religions: the religion of salvation by works and the religion of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Externally there may be considerable similarity between the two, but basically they are mutually exclusive. Romans 3; Galatians 3.

L. W. SPITZ

GESETZ UND FREIHEIT. Das Problem des tertius usus legis bei Luther und die neutestamentliche Parainese. Von Wilfried Joest. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Goettingen, 1951. 242 pages, 6×9. Paper cover. DM 18.50.

The author, a young professor of systematic theology at Heidelberg University, offers one of the more significant German theological publications which have appeared since the war. It is a study in Luther's theology, particularly concerning the specially brilliant light of the Reformation, the distinction between Law and Gospel. This book ought to be read according to the principle which guides one in inspecting Da Vinci's *Last Supper*, i. e., one will gain an over-all impression only to return again and again to study details. The reviewer read Joest's book somewhat hurriedly to get the overview and expects to return to sections for a careful study of the rich quotations and interpretations of Luther's writings. The book is divided into two large sections, the first, "Law and Liberty in Luther," and the second, "Luther's theology and the Parainese (admonition) of the New Testament."

The first part is divided into three sections. 1. The author shows the truly dialectical character of Luther's theology in the contrast between Law and Gospel. The Law is always the defiant "no" to every "yes" of the Gospel, and the Gospel is the glorious and triumphant "yes" to every "no" of the Law, so that the Law reached its end in the Gospel. The author points out that no theologian has so clearly distinguished between the divine Law and human legalism; between freedom from the Law and bondage to human works. Joest discusses Luther's views on the third use of the Law as developed in his conflict with the antinomian trend of the 16th century.

2. Particularly rich is the section in which the author discusses Luther's famous statement: *simul iustus et peccator*. This statement raises problems which disturb theological students—probably also the pastor in his congregational activity. The author points out how Luther uses the phrase to describe the total person: both as totally a sinner under the curse of the Law, and totally a just man completely under the Gospel; that the Christian life is the transfer from the state of nothingness to an estate of superabundance through faith in Christ. However, Luther's famous statement is also to be viewed as describing a *partim-partim* condition, that is to say, the Christian life is a daily conflict and a daily defeat, but also a daily progress and a daily victory.

3. The author shows that the Law and the Gospel in their antithesis may be viewed eschatologically, inasmuch as through the Gospel the judgment of the Law is really a thing of the past. But at the same time it is also a "not yet."

In the second part of his book the author discusses the problem whether the New Testament demands works as a secondary condition of salvation, and whether Luther incorrectly evaluated the seeming contradiction between such New Testament statements as teach the doctrine of justification by faith and such statements as speak of the final Judgment according to man's works. We believe the author has admirably set forth Luther's tremendous insights into this problem.

F. E. MAYER

ONE AND HOLY. By Karl Adam, translated by Cecily Hastings. Sheed and Ward, New York, 1951. 130 pages, 5×7½. \$2.00.

On a beautiful Sunday afternoon in the summer of 1948 the late Dr. Th. Graebner and the undersigned reviewer called on Prof. Karl Adam in his Tuebingen home. The well-known Roman Catholic theologian (author of *The Spirit of Catholicism*) had prepared himself for the interview by a survey of Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, of which he spoke rather favorably, except for Dr. Pieper's sharp attacks on the Papacy. Karl Adam is deeply interested in the *Una Sancta* movement, which attempts to bring about the reunion of Lutheranism and Roman Catholicism. The present book has grown out of the lectures which Professor Adam delivered before meetings of the *Una Sancta*. He presents his suggestion for a reunion of

the churches in three chapters. 1. The root of the Reformation; 2. How Luther left the Church: the possibility of reunion; 3. How reunion is to be attained.

Dr. Adam deplores the Catholic vilifications against Luther and approves such Roman Catholic historians as Joseph Lortz, *Reformation in Deutschland*. Adam recommends an objective study of the Reformation and believes that by "a return to Luther" it will be found that Lutheran Christianity can help Roman Catholic Christianity, since both have in common an objective teaching authority, Rome the Papacy, Lutheranism its Confessions. Both share a common interest in Biblical studies, and the reunion of the two denominations can be hoped for on the basis of a new exegetical study of Matt. 16:18, 19. As a loyal Romanist, Adam holds that "for the sake of the unity of the Church the rock of Peter's office must remain through the centuries, so that the gates of hell will not prevail" (p. 76). While Adam does not recede one inch from the position that Peter and his successors are the only depository of the truth (pp. 77, 79), Adam suggests three basic principles to guide the possible reunion: (1) Each must take its own confession seriously. (2) Each must give himself unconditionally to Christ and His holy will. (3) Each must rid himself of all loveless prejudice against the other's faith.

Two observations are in place. (1) The book was written before the adoption of the dogma of Mary's Assumption. This action on the part of the Pope has shattered the friendly relations between some Lutheran and Roman Catholic theologians of Germany. (2) This book was written before the Amsterdam meeting in 1948. According to its age-old tradition, Rome could not participate (cp. *Man's Disorder and God's Design*, I). True, the encyclical *Provida Matris* (1895) suggests the possibility of the reconciliation and reunion of Protestantism and Rome. Rome, however, cannot consider a reunion except on its own premises, chief of which is that all Christendom is duty bound to accept and submit to the infallible teaching office of the Pope. Rome cannot enter any interdenominational relations which presume the equality of a non-Roman church with Rome, as is specifically stated in the encyclical *Mortalium Animos* (January 6, 1926). Romanists may enter into interdenominational discussions with non-Romanists only in so-called "mixed matters" or purely secular matters. In spite of Adam's optimism for a possible union with Protestantism, the fact remains: *Roma locuta, causa finita*.

F. E. MAYER

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN A SECULARIZED WORLD. By John R. Lavik, M. A., D. D. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minn. 153 pages. \$2.00.

This book is the result of an Augsburg Publishing House lectureship award, and part of its contents was presented in a series of lectures at the midwinter convocation of Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, in 1951. The author is a seasoned churchman of the E. L. C. with a rich experience

in nearly every branch of church work. Soon after his graduation from Luther Seminary he served his Church in Alberta, Canada, as a pastor, then as president of Camrose College in Camrose, Alberta, and later as president of the Canada District, where the present writer knew him as an able and progressive church administrator. Since then he has served his Church in various capacities, and since 1939 as president of Luther Seminary, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Dr. Lavik approaches the task he has set for himself in this book with the equipment of mature, Christian scholarship and with a deep insight into the evils which characterize our world today. He is positive in his treatment of the subject, sober and thoroughly Christian and Lutheran in his judgments. He discusses his subject in thirteen chapters with the following headings: 1) The Secularized World, 2) This Present Evil World, 3) What Is the Christian Church? 4) The Mission of the Christian Church, 5) The Resources of the Christian Church, 6) The Strategy of the Christian Church, 7) The Revealed Word of God, 8) Preaching the Word, 9) Teaching Them, 10) The Christian College, 11) Ministerial Training, 12) Communion of Saints in Action, 13) On to the Uttermost.

Dr. Lavik begins by defining secularism in its present manifestation and shows that it is one of the most serious problems confronting the Church today. He points out that liberalism in the Church, among other influence factors, has been one of the most effective allies of "onmarching secularism." To understand the nature and extent of that radical evil the Church must again re-emphasize what the Bible says about sin, a concept that has almost disappeared from the vocabulary of modernistic churches. He feels that even by now the secularist himself ought to be able to see the folly of his philosophy. "He should be able to see that civilization, world culture, may indeed change outward appearances, but the nature of the human heart remains the same. Unspeakable savagery may arise right out of the highest forms of worldly culture, which in a terribly realistic way was illustrated in World War II. While it may yield new insights into the forces of nature and develop significant techniques, a system of education which leaves God out of consideration also opens new avenues for the entrance of satanic wickedness into human life through which the worldly spirit reaches its ultimate development." He quotes Dean Mumford Jones of the Harvard Graduate School as saying: "It is one of the paradoxes of our time that modern society needs to fear only the educated man. The primitive people of the earth constitute no menace. The most serious crimes against civilization can be committed only by the educated and technically competent people." (P. 18.)

The chapters dealing with the Church, its mission power and strategy, the revealed Word, and Christian education are refreshing reading and good Lutheran theology. The chapter on ministerial training ought to be

read often by theological professors and students. There is only one little question mark I made in the margin of p. 129, regarding the question of a postgraduate seminary. But that is a matter of opinion, and because of the problems involved, opinions are bound to differ. However, the question of a graduate school of theology is very important for our generation. The Lutheran Church in America must give it serious attention, or secularism will also find its way into the Lutheran Church by way of the instructors and theological professors who have received their advanced academic and theological training in thoroughly secularized schools about us.

The style of the book is lucid and dignified, a model of theological prose. The print is clear and affords pleasant reading. All in all, here is an excellent book, and I would recommend it to every Lutheran and Protestant pastor. It will also provide excellent topics for discussions in church societies and other Christian groups. Dr. Lavik has rendered a commendable service to the Lutheran Church in America by giving us this book.

A. M. REHWINKEL

YOU AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. By Stuart R. Oglesby. John Knox Press, Richmond, Va., 1952. 112 pages, 5½×8. \$1.50.

The twelve chapters of this book contain the substance of sermons preached in the course of more than twenty years on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, as it affects the life of a Christian. The author does not intend to provide an exhaustive treatise on the Person and work of the Holy Spirit; nevertheless, one misses a chapter on the significance of the means of grace in the work of the Holy Spirit. Dr. Oglesby is the pastor of a Presbyterian church.

L. W. SPITZ

RELIGION IN CHINESE GARMENT. By Karl Ludvig Reichelt, translated by Joseph Tetlie. Philosophical Library, New York, 1951. 180 pages, 5½×8½. \$4.50.

Dr. Reichelt was a missionary in the service of the Norwegian Missionary Society (of Norway), working in Hunan Province, China, since 1903. Early in his missionary career he took a special interest in Buddhists and learned all he could about their religious beliefs. In 1920 he traveled about Scandinavia preaching about Buddhism and its needs, and as a result the Christian Mission to Buddhists was organized, and he became a pioneer in a new type of work. In 1927 the English translation of *Truth and Tradition in Chinese Buddhism* appeared, and in 1930 he moved to Hong Kong and established the Taofongshan Christian Institute for the special purpose of reaching as many Buddhist pilgrims, both clergy and lay, as possible.

Now has come this newest book from his pen, in which he gives copious information in usable detail on animism, Confucianism, the cult of ancestors, Taoism, Chinese Buddhism, Chinese Mohammedanism, and the

various sects (minor religions) in China. We are happy that this book has come out, for here the average student of Chinese things will find what he will need to know about the religions of China. It seems the information here given is quite dependable, and it is more in line with what the average person on the street believes, and less the abstract quotations from the sutras. One wishes that the romanizations used had been the standard used for the Chinese national language instead of for Cantonese.

We submit two quotes: "Both Laotze and Confucius hold to the opinion that 'the human heart is originally good.'" "Chwangtze . . . once had a dream. He seemed to have been changed into a butterfly. . . . But suddenly he awoke and found that he was Chwangtze after all. Then came the thought: 'When I seemed to be a butterfly, was *that* dream or reality; or am I now a butterfly dreaming that I am a Chwangtze?'" The latter is in connection with Taoism.

Since this book has been printed, we learn that Dr. Reichelt died on March 13, 1952.

E. C. ZIMMERMANN

THE BASIS OF MILLENNIAL FAITH. By Floyd E. Hamilton. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 162 pages, 8×6. \$2.00.

The Rev. F. E. Hamilton is a pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Los Angeles, Calif. Formerly a premillennialist, he was converted to amillennialism through the testimony of Dr. Machen and others. The book contains sixteen chapters on such topics as "The Blessed Hope," "Premillennialism," "Postmillennialism," "Amillennialism," "Literal Interpretation of Old Testament Prophecy," "The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares," "Paul's Teaching About the Second Coming," "The Teaching of Peter on the Second Coming," "Does Revelation Chapter 20 Teach an Earthly Millennium?" and other important phases of the subject. There is a note of indefiniteness now and then, as, for example, when he pleads with millennialists to co-operate with amillennialists since after all their common task is the same and Christ's second coming will decide the issue in one way or another. Scripture, we believe, is sufficiently clear in its witness against premillennialism so that no one need make such a concession to its advocates. Nor can we agree with the author when he writes that "the whole of the Israelitish people," who are living at the time of Christ's second coming, "will become Christian" (p. 144). This contradicts a statement of his own in another place to the effect that only the elect will be saved. But these and other similar faults do not lessen the value of this book, which first appeared in 1942 and is now offered to Christian readers in a reprint. There is a definite note of value in the author's personal testimony as a former premillennialist.

J. T. MUELLER

